

# Crime and Violence in The Bahamas

IDB Series on Crime and Violence in the  
Caribbean

Heather Sutton

Institutions for Development and  
Caribbean Country Departments

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## **Abstract**

This report is part of an IDB technical note series on crime and violence in the Caribbean. The overall aim is to establish a baseline in the crime prevention arena against which progress can be assessed. The report compiles the available data from multiple sources in order to provide a diagnosis of the size, characteristics, and changing nature of the problem of crime and violence in The Bahamas. In addition, the report provides a survey of the various crime prevention and suppression policies, programs and projects adopted by government and private and non-governmental organizations in recent years. In performing the above-mentioned tasks, the report offers an assessment of the data collection, analysis, and crime response capabilities in The Bahamas, and makes suggestions about the most effective way forward.

**JEL Codes:** I39, Y80, J12, O54

**Key words:** Violence, crime, The Bahamas, prevention

**Contents**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 6

I. INTRODUCTION ..... 10

    Methodology..... 11

II. A CLOSER LOOK AT CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE BAHAMAS ..... 12

    Homicide ..... 15

    Assault and Injuries ..... 26

    Violence in the Home ..... 28

    Sexual Violence..... 34

    Violence at Schools..... 38

    Robbery..... 40

    Property Crime ..... 42

    Gangs..... 43

III. THE BAHAMIAN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING CRIME AND VIOLENCE..... 44

    Public Institutions ..... 45

*Ministry of National Security*..... 45

*Ministry of State and Legal Affairs and Office of the Attorney General* ..... 48

*Ministry of Social Services and Community Development*..... 49

*Ministry of Education, Science and Technology*..... 51

*Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture*..... 51

*Ministry of Health*..... 52

*College of The Bahamas* ..... 53

    Non-Governmental Organizations ..... 53

    Laws, Policies, and Strategies for Reducing Crime and Violence ..... 54

*Laws*..... 54

*National Plans, Policies, and Strategies*..... 60

IV. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS FOR REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE BAHAMAS ..... 67

    Primary Prevention Programmes..... 68

    Secondary Prevention ..... 69

    Suppression ..... 69

    Tertiary Prevention ..... 70

V. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS..... 82

    What Data Are Collected and Available? ..... 82

    Summary of Data Limitations..... 84

VI. CONCLUSIONS ..... 86

The Problem.....	86
Research, Data, and Evaluation .....	86
Legislation and Policy .....	88
Programmes, Projects, and Interventions .....	88
Final Comments .....	89
Annexes.....	90
Annex 1. Methodology for Identifying and Selecting Relevant Non-Governmental Organizations .....	90
Annex 2. Organizations and Individuals Interviewed.....	91
Annex 3. Programme Questionnaire.....	94
Annex 4. Definitions of Murder Motives (Royal Bahamas Police Force).....	99
Annex 5. National Reported Crimes, 2000–2013.....	100
Annex 6. Ministry of Education 10-Year Plan, Goal 17 Objectives .....	101
Annex 7. Programmes, Projects, and Interventions .....	102
Annex 8. Update on 2014 Amendments .....	136
Bibliographic References .....	138

## Boxes

1. Data Sources on Crime and Violence in The Bahamas.....	13
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## Figures

1. Crime Rates in The Bahamas per 100,000 Population.....	14
2. Crimes Against the Person – Rate per 100,000 Population in 2013.....	15
3. Crimes Against Property – Rate per 100,000 Population in 2013.....	15
4. Total Number of Murder Victims in The Bahamas, 2000–2014.....	16
5. Total Murder Victims (RBPF), Total Mortality Due to Assault (Ministry of Health), and Violent Deaths Due to Events of Undetermined Intent (Ministry of Health), 2000–2011.....	17
6. Murder Rate per 100,000 Population, 2000–2014.....	18
7. Comparison of Intentional Homicide Rates per 100,000 Population in The Bahamas and Other Caribbean Countries, 2000–2013.....	19
8. Percentage of Murder Victims by Age (2013/ Number of Victims by Age (2010–2013)).....	20
9. Percentage of Murder Victims by Sex (2013) and Total Number of Victims by Sex (2010–2013).....	20
10. Murder Motives, 2013.....	21
11. Murder Motives, 2010–2013.....	22
12. Total Recorded Murder Victims by Geographical Region, 2009–2013.....	23
13. Murders by Police Divisions in New Providence.....	24
14. Percentage of Murders by Weapon, 2010–2013.....	25
15. Gunshot Wounds and Stabbings Treated at Princess Margaret Hospital Emergency Room, 2008–2013.....	25
16. Assault Rate per 100,000 Population, 2009–2013.....	26
17. Inpatient Injuries due to Assault (Public Hospital Authority) versus Murder (RBPF), 2000–2007.....	27
18. Murders versus Gunshot and Stab Wounds Treated at Princess Margaret Hospital,	

2008–2013.....	28
19. Assaults due to Domestic Violence between Intimate Partners, 2010–2012.....	30
20. Individuals Treated by The Bahamas Crisis Centre by Issue Identified on Intake Forms, 2013.....	31
21. New Reported and Re-opened Cases of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Abandonment Handled by the Department of Social Services, 2006–2013.....	33
22. Types of Child Abuse Reported to the Department of Social Services, 2006–2013.....	33
23. Cases of Sexual Violence (Rape, Attempted Rape, Incest, Unlawful Sex, and Other Sexual Offenses), 2000–2013.....	35
24. Rape Rate per 100,000 Population in The Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados.....	36
25. Comparison of Royal Bahamas Police Force Rape Reports with Emergency Room Treatment of Rape in Princess Margaret’s Hospital (PMH), 2008–2013.....	37
26. Rape Rate per 100,000 Population by Region, 2009–2013.....	38
27. Robbery, Armed Robbery, and Attempted Robbery, 2000–2013.....	40
28. Robbery Rate per 100,000 Population by Region, 2009–2013.....	41
29. Total Robberies by Police Division in New Providence, 2009–2013.....	41
30. Property Crimes Recorded by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2000–2013.....	42
31. Burglary and Break-ins, 2000–2013.....	43
32. Use of Corporal Punishment by Public School Teachers.....	67

**Tables**

1. Number of New and Total Clients at the Bahamas Crisis Centre, 2007–2013.....	30
2. Number and Type of Calls Received by the National Child Abuse Hotline, 2011–2013.....	34
3. Acts of Violence and Crimes Reported by Three School Districts in New Providence, 2012/2013 School Year.....	39
4. Commissioner’s Policing Plan Priorities, 2011–2014.....	62
5. Primary Prevention: Situational and Community Prevention.....	71
6. Primary Prevention: Individual Behaviours .....	72
7. Secondary Prevention: Targeting Early Delinquent or Violent Behaviours .....	76
8. Suppression .....	78
9. Tertiary Prevention .....	80
A7.1. Date and Type of Firearms Destroyed by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2012–2013.....	108
A7.2. Firearms Seized by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2009–2013.....	108
A7.3. Reasons Clients Sought Services at The Bahamas Crisis Centre, 2013.....	113



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Overview of Crime in The Bahamas**

Records from the Royal Bahamas Police Force, as well as public health sources, confirm high levels of crime and violence that have consistently risen during the past decade. Crime data disaggregated by type clearly show elevated levels of some of the most violent crimes, specifically murder, armed robbery, and rape.

### **Homicide**

#### ***General***

- The murder rate in the Bahamas has more than doubled in the last 10 years and is now among the highest in the Caribbean region.
- Between 2000 and 2014, the rate of homicide reached its high in 2011 (37.4 per 100,000 population) and dropped slightly to 31.9 in 2014.

#### ***Victims***

- Victims of homicide in The Bahamas are predominantly male.
  - Over the past five years males have accounted for a considerably higher proportion of homicide victims. In 2013, 87% of victims were male.
- The main victims of homicide are between 18 and 25 years old, although the category of 26-35 year-olds is not far behind and that rate has been increasing in the last five years. These two age categories represent 27% of the population, but 62% of all homicides between 2009 and 2013.

#### ***Motives***

- Retaliation was the main murder motive in 2013 (33%) and has been consistently climbing since 2010.
- 20% of all murders in 2013 were related to robberies, another motive that has increased over the last five years.

#### ***Location***

- Over the last five years for which data were available (2009-2013), 86% of all murders took place in New Providence
- Police districts with the highest numbers of homicides in 2013 were the Central, Northeastern, and Southeastern districts.

#### ***Weapon***

- Firearms are the most popular weapon of choice for perpetrators of homicides. Firearms accounted for the largest proportion of deaths (76.5%) between 2010 and 2013.
- While guns may be more lethal, the number of stabbings and shootings treated at Princess Margaret Hospital are nearly equally as frequent (288 gunshot wounds and 251 stabbing wounds were treated in 2013).

### **Assaults and Injuries**

- There was a slight decrease in reported assaults from 2009 to 2013, but the average assault rate per 100,000 population for the five-year period (918) and the rate in 2013 (788) remain relatively high for the region.
- The number of gunshot and stabbing wounds treated at Princess Margaret Hospital far outweighs the number of murders in The Bahamas. For example, although there were 119 murders in 2013, there were 4.5 times as many stabbings and shootings treated at

the hospital (539). Stabbings and shootings appear to be increasing at an even higher rate than murder.

### **Violence in the Home and Sexual Violence**

- While the primary victims of homicide are young men, violence against women and children is also a concern. Both intimate partner violence and rape disproportionately affect women and are highly underreported. No surveys have been conducted to estimate the national levels of prevalence of either intimate partner violence or sexual violence in The Bahamas.
- In 2013, according to the Royal Bahamas Police Force, domestic violence was responsible for 14 per cent of homicides.
- In 2013, 13 per cent of all homicide victims were female.
- Non-fatal domestic violence was responsible for an average of 28 per cent of all assaults reported to the police between 2010 and 2013.
- The average rate of rapes reported over 2009–2013 was 27 per 100,000 population, which is above the already-high Caribbean regional average. Emergency room data show that this number is far under-representative of the number of actual cases taking place. Yet, proportionally far fewer resources and policy initiatives have been dedicated to reducing rape than other types of crime.

### **Robbery**

- Robbery is also a crime that has increased and become increasingly violent in the last decade. Reported unarmed robberies increased 92 per cent, from 188 in 2006 to 261 in 2013. Reported armed robberies are far higher in number and have also nearly doubled from the low of 548 cases in 2006 to 1,022 cases in 2013.
- Of the cases of robbery for which the sex of the victim was recorded in 2013 (73 per cent of all cases), 28 per cent of victims were female and 72 per cent were male. About 11 per cent of robbery victims in 2013 were foreigners and 89 per cent were Bahamian. The robbery rate per 100,000 population in New Providence in 2013 (522.2) was far higher than the national rate and the rates of other regions of the country.

### **Property Crime**

- Reported property crimes are more common than violent crimes in The Bahamas, but have been decreasing since 2011.
- The Royal Bahamas Police Force reported high levels of theft until a drastic drop in 2005. Theft levels began climbing again around 2008, perhaps related to the global economic crisis that affected tourism and jobs.
- Reported burglary and break-ins have been decreasing since 2010.
- Reported vehicle thefts increased at a fairly steady rate from 2000 to 2008, then dipped slightly in 2009, only to increase again until another slight drop between 2012 and 2013.

### **Gangs**

- While gangs are a fairly new and evolving phenomenon in The Bahamas, according to the Ministry of National Security, around 18 different gangs have been identified as operating in The Bahamas. They vary in size, structure, membership, and the extent of involvement with illegal activities.

- At the time of this report, no official data from the Royal Bahamas Police Force was available on gang-related crimes.

## **Institutional Framework for Addressing Crime and Violence in The Bahamas**

Key Institutions working to address crime and violence include:

- Ministry of National Security
- Ministry of State and Legal Affairs and Office of the Attorney General
- Ministry of Social Services and Community Development
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
- Ministry of Health
- College of The Bahamas
- Non-governmental organizations (13 identified for this report)

## **Laws, Policies, and Strategies for Reducing Crime and Violence**

- In 2011 and 2013 two different administrations put forward anti-crime legislative packages that, among other measures, proposed increasing sentences for particularly grievous crimes. Given the challenges within the criminal justice system discussed in this report – including unsolved crimes, the significant obstacles to efficiently processing criminal trials, and the overcrowding of the prison system – it is worth asking if longer and more severe sentences is truly the solution to the perceived problem of criminal impunity.
- On the other hand, several foundational laws have also been approved that help to better define certain types of violence as crimes, provide tools and protection for victims, and protect children and juveniles within the justice system (e.g., the 2007 Domestic Violence Act, the 2007 Child Protection Act, and the 2008 amendment to the 1991 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act).
- The major crime and violence initiatives under the current administration are outlined within the framework of *Project Safe Bahamas*, which involves four major components: *Operation Ceasefire*, *Urban Renewal 2.0*, *Swift Justice Initiative*, and *Safe Bahamas*.
- Other national plans and strategies analysed in this report include the *2012–2016 National Anti-Drug Strategy*, *Commissioner’s Policing Plans (2011–2014)*, the *Strategic Plan to Address Gender-based Violence (2014)* and the *10-Year Education Plan and Safe Schools Protocol*.

## **Programmes and Projects for Reducing Crime and Violence in The Bahamas**

- 33 programmes and/or projects were identified as having within their mandate the objective of crime or violence prevention or reduction. An inventory of these programmes is provided in the full report.
- Using the public health approach to categorize violence prevention based on the continuum of when the intervention takes place, the identified programmes fell into the following categories:
  - Nine primary prevention initiatives (five focused on situational and community level prevention, and four focused on changing individual behaviors);
  - 12 secondary prevention initiatives (eight focused on services for victims and five targeting early delinquent behaviors of perpetrators);
  - Five crime suppression interventions;

- Seven tertiary prevention interventions (many focused on substance abuse, but also on rehabilitating ex-offenders).
- While many promising programmes were identified, most had been in place for less than two years, or had undergone major structural and programmatic changes in the past five years. In some cases this was due to a change in government (e.g., Urban Renewal 2.0) or, in the case of many NGOs, to changes in funding availability.
- No programmes or projects could provide impact evaluations and many did not provide data on basic inputs (budgets, number of staff, etc.) and outputs (beneficiaries, activities realized, etc.), let alone changes at the outcome level.
- The lack of long-running programmes makes assessment of results difficult and demonstrates the absence of long-term sustainable prevention initiatives. It is important to address the problem of programme sustainability and to discover ways to insulate violence and crime prevention programmes from politics, elections, and the lack of long-term funding.

### **Research, Data, and Evaluation**

- This report documented many recent signs that data collection and evaluation are increasingly recognized by Bahamian authorities and NGOs as an important component of fighting crime and violence. However, significant barriers remain in the areas of *data collection*, *data sharing*, *data analysis*, and *programme evaluation*. These appear to pervade the range of government and non-governmental organizations and impede rigorous empirical research, program evaluation, and the construction of an evidence base of successful interventions.
- In many countries crime observatories have been established to collect and share data on crime and violence in a standardized way. These data can then be used to make evidence-based policy recommendations. Such an initiative in The Bahamas could be useful.
- Although there is a sense of urgency to implement new violence prevention programmes and strategies, this urgency should not eclipse the need for continual support for further research and understanding of the phenomenon in the Bahamian context. A rigorous research agenda should be established to continue to explore some of the issues touched on in this report (i.e., gangs, violence in the home, violence in schools, associated risk and protective factors, the effectiveness of the criminal justice system and others).
- However, it is not necessary to have a complete understanding of all the causes to achieve significant reductions in crime and violence. Around the world, the best-known approaches to learning about what works to reduce violence have involved a cycle of (1) diagnosing specific violence or crime problems, (2) designing preventative or suppressive interventions, (3) evaluating the interventions, (4) refining the interventions, and (5) replicating the evaluation. The continued testing and evaluation of policing and preventative programmes can lead to equally valuable information about crime and violence.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Bahamas is known internationally for its beautiful beaches stretching across 700 islands and cays. A closer look at this island paradise, however, reveals that crime and violence are permeating the social fabric of Bahamian communities. Bahamians are increasingly concerned not only about the potential negative effects of crime on tourism – which accounts for nearly 51 per cent of the country's GDP<sup>1</sup> – but also about its impact on their quality of life. Although the aggregated rates of reported Crimes Against the Person and Crimes Against Property have declined slightly since peaking in 2011, the anxiety of the population is not unfounded. A closer look at the data reveals that the most violent crimes – specifically murder, rape, and armed robbery – have seen steady increases over the last five to 10 years.

The murder rate has more than doubled in the last 10 years. At 31.9 per 100,000 population in 2014, the Bahamian homicide rate is above the already-high regional average (16 per 100,000) and way higher than the global average (6.2 per 100,000).<sup>2</sup> The primary victims of murder are young males (18-25 years old), killed with a firearm as a result of unresolved conflicts and retaliation.

Recent efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to collect better information on violence in the home, particularly violence against women and children, have shown that these crimes are also of pre-eminent concern. Although family and intimate partner violence is highly underreported to police globally, 14 per cent of all murders (2013) and an average of 28 per cent of all assaults (2010–2012) were related to domestic violence, according to the Royal Bahamas Police Force.<sup>3</sup> Studies have also found that many inmates at Foxhill Prison were brought up in homes with higher levels of domestic violence than the general population (Fielding, 2004).

Police data show that the average rape rate between 2009 and 2013 was 27 per 100,000 population. Although the average murder rate for the same period was only slightly higher (29.3 per 100,000), proportionally far fewer resources and policy initiatives have been dedicated to reducing rape in The Bahamas. Emergency room data further show that cases of rape treated at the Princess Margaret Hospital alone were nearly 1.6 times higher than those recorded nationally by the police, suggesting that the problem is likely far larger than what is captured by police data.<sup>4</sup>

While property crimes such as burglary, breaking and entering, and general theft have been decreasing steadily since 2008, armed robbery and car theft remain a concern. Vehicle theft has more than doubled in the last 10 years. Although armed robbery may not always result in physical harm, the psychological trauma and fear it causes can increase societal feelings of insecurity. Armed robbery increased from 548 cases in 2006 to 1,022 cases in 2013.

When asked about the causes of crime and violence, many Bahamians will cite substance abuse, unemployment, poverty, poor parenting, teenage pregnancy, absentee fathers, and the breakdown of social capital (defined as the capacity to transmit positive values to younger generations).<sup>5</sup> This report identified many crime prevention and control initiatives that are

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Statistics, Nassau, The Bahamas.

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force; and UNODC (2014, p. 23).

<sup>3</sup> Calculated using unpublished data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force and population estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Calculated using unpublished data provided by Princess Margaret Hospital.

<sup>5</sup> Taken from a brainstorming session with 100 participants in the IDB Bahamas workshop entitled "Crime and Violence in The Bahamas: Data-Driven Policies for Effective Citizen Security," March 13, 2014.

targeting these issues. However, there is a lack of empirical research identifying the specific risk and protective factors relevant to crime and violence in The Bahamas. Though many public institutions and non-profit organizations recognize the need for better data collection and programme evaluation, there is insufficient data to accurately understand the problem, much less show what works to address it. While the intuition and experience of practitioners closest to the violence are invaluable, international experience shows that they must be coupled with systematic data collection across sectors, followed by sound analysis and evaluation of existing interventions. Three measures are needed to move toward more targeted, evidence-based, and data-driven initiatives in The Bahamas: (1) improved data collection systems; (2) increased data sharing and transparency; and (3) improved use of evaluations to understand what works and what doesn't.

The objective of this report is to review multiple sources of data on crime and violence in The Bahamas, as well as to document reduction and prevention policies, programmes, and projects the country has adopted in recent years. In so doing, we aim to understand the size and dimensions of the problem, the data gaps that exist, and the data collection, analysis and response capabilities in The Bahamas. Similar studies are being conducted in other Caribbean countries, and collectively these studies contain a wealth of information important for understanding and dealing with crime and violence in the region.

Section II of this report examines the most recent available data on crime and violence. Section III identifies the main stakeholders and existing institutional framework for suppressing and preventing crime and violence, while Section IV explores programmes and projects currently being implemented by these institutions. Section V reviews and assesses the country's data generation and analysis capabilities. The report concludes with recommendations presented in Section VI.

## **Methodology**

A wide range of initial research was undertaken to complete this report. The author identified and conducted interviews at key public institutions that in some way address crime or violence prevention or victimization in 2014, including the Ministry of National Security and the Royal Bahamas Police Force; the Ministry of State and Legal Affairs (Office of the Attorney General); various departments of the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development; the Ministry of Health and Public Hospitals Authority; the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture; and two juvenile detention centres (the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls and Simpson Penn Centre for boys). Additionally, 13 leading non-profit organizations working in this sector were interviewed.<sup>6</sup> A list of individuals consulted for this study can be found in Annex 2. The institutions and organizations identified were asked to share data collected on the incidence of crime and violence, as well as information on any related programmes currently being implemented. Annex 5 presents a table with national crime data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force. Semi-structured interviews were preceded by a request that a uniform questionnaire be filled out for each and every programme on crime and violence that the participating agencies and organizations are implementing.<sup>7</sup> Although a total of 33 programmes and initiatives were identified, it is important to note that these programmes do not represent an exhaustive inventory of all such programmes in The Bahamas.

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<sup>6</sup> Non-profit organizations were identified and included using the strategies and criteria explained in Annex 1 and by no means represent an exhaustive list.

<sup>7</sup> The questionnaire is presented in Annex 3.

## II. A CLOSER LOOK AT CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE BAHAMAS

The difficulties of measuring violence and crime in The Bahamas, although perhaps more pronounced than in some more-developed countries, are not unlike challenges faced around the world. For several reasons, existing data systems capture only a small slice of violent behaviours and crime. First, violent behaviours that are considered to be crimes (homicide, robbery, etc.) are generally more accurately counted and classified than types of violence that are not illegal (fights in schools, corporal punishment, emotional abuse, etc.). In other words, more attention is paid to violence that breaks the law. Second, many crimes are never reported to the police in the first place. Third, the limited capacity of relevant institutions in The Bahamas to collect and analyse data may result in incomplete and possibly inaccurate data. Finally, the data that *are* available are produced by different systems and are not easily comparable due to the distinct rules of each institution for selecting, classifying, and counting acts of crime and violence. There also appears to be difficulties with sharing data both across agencies and with the public.

Considering the aforementioned constraints, this report seeks to present an overview of the most recent data available on crime and violence in The Bahamas. Box 1 presents a general explanation of the main sources of data used in this section.

Over the past decade, violent crimes around the world have generally been decreasing, but in the Caribbean they have been increasing, with a few exceptions. Barbados, Saint Lucia, and Antigua and Barbuda have maintained low and fairly steady levels of violent crime, but still have high levels of property crime (UNDP, 2012, p. 20). Other countries such as Jamaica have been racked by record high levels of violent crime and yet maintain fairly low levels of property crime. While The Bahamas has seen a small decline recently in overall violent and property crimes, both remain high in comparison with other Caribbean countries, and some of the most violent crimes are increasing in number.

### **Box 1: Data Sources on Crime and Violence in The Bahamas**

The **Royal Bahamas Police Force** began generating statistics on crime starting in 1963 in three broad categories:

- **Crimes Against a Person** – These incidents constitute what is termed violent crime, where a perpetrator interacts with another person or persons in the commission of a crime. Within this category are homicides, rapes, assaults, and robberies. Both actual and attempted offenses are included. Most recently, the authorities have begun keeping more detailed and specific records of incidents of family violence and violence against women.
- **Crimes Against Property** – These are crimes involving the damage, destruction, or unlawful use or removal of physical property and/or other assets owned or controlled by an individual or entity. Sub-categories include theft, break-ins to houses, break-ins to shops, fraud, and receipt of stolen goods.
- **Other Crimes** – These incidents include a range of offenses that do not fit into the above major categories. Included in this category are crimes such as drug possession and distribution, possession of unlicensed firearms, and vagrancy.

The **Ministry of Health** also produces important data on deaths and injuries resulting from violence. In The Bahamas, the International Classification of Diseases and Injuries (ICD) is used to record all inpatient procedures in the public hospitals in New Providence (Princess Margaret Hospital) and Grand Bahamas (RAND Hospital).

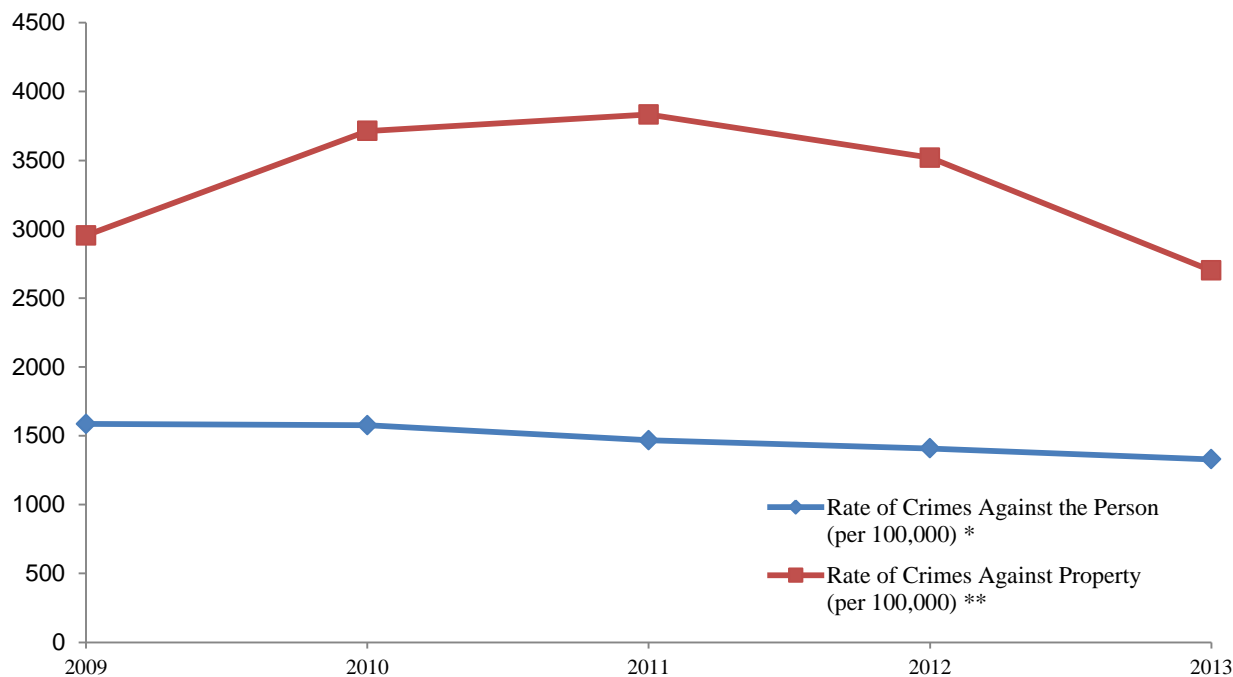
- Data on violent deaths and injuries are registered according to the 10th revision (ICD-10, Code Numbers X85–Y09), under “external causes of morbidity and mortality” and applying the term “assault,” which includes “homicides and injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means.” Currently in The Bahamas, the last available ICD coded data on morbidity are from 2007 (Princess Margaret Hospital) and 2013 (RAND Hospital). Select mortality totals (X85-Y36) by year, were provided for this report up through 2011 according to Registered Deaths, Department of Statistics.
- Emergency room data are recorded via a separate process and were available only for Princess Margaret Hospital through 2013. Emergency room data made available included rapes, stabbing wounds, and gunshot wounds treated.

Further data presented were supplied by the **Ministry of Social Services and Community Development** (mainly on child abuse cases), the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology** (on violence in schools), and **The Bahamas Crisis Centre** (on cases of violence against women and family violence).

Figure 1 presents an overview of crimes recorded by the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) in the last five years of data provided (see Annex 5). The figure shows the aggregate rate per 100,000 population in the RBPF categories of “Crimes Against the Person” (these incidents are frequently categorized in the literature as “violent crimes”) and “Crimes Against Property” (considered “non-violent crimes”). Crimes against property peaked in 2011 and by 2013 had dipped back down to pre-2009 levels. On the other hand, crimes against the person have varied less over the last five years, with a very slight decline since 2010.



**Figure 1: Crime Rates in The Bahamas per 100,000 Population**



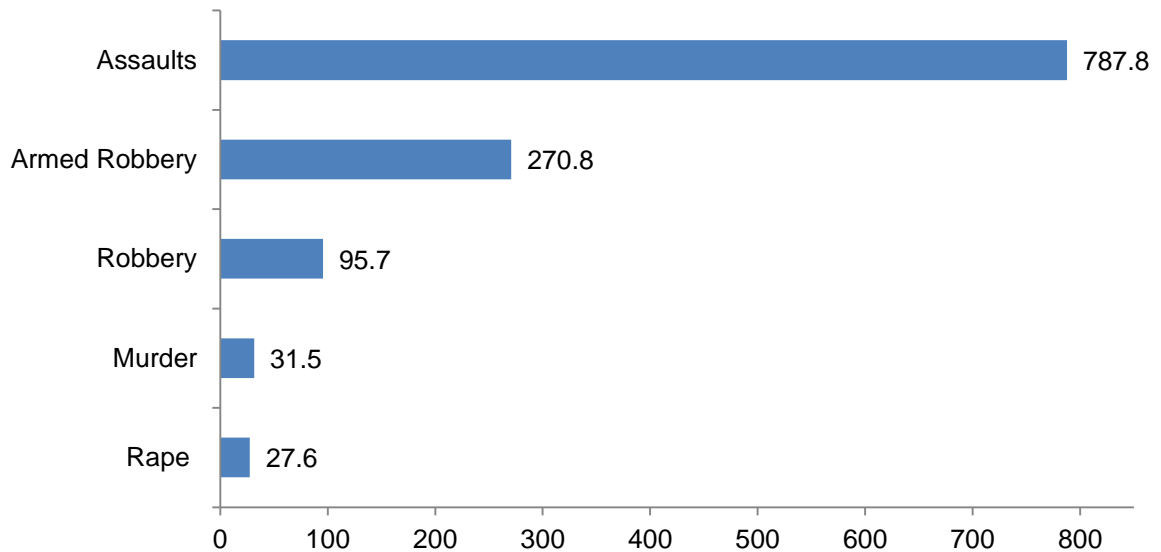
Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit. Rates per 100,000 population were calculated using population estimates (Medium Fertility) for the respective years by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

\* Rate of Crimes Against the Person were calculated by combining categories of murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, assault, rape, attempted rape, other sexual offenses, unlawful sex, armed robbery, robbery, attempted robbery, and kidnapping/abduction.

\*\* Rate of Crimes Against Property calculated by combining categories of burglary, house break-ins, shop break-ins, stealing, stealing from vehicles, stealing vehicles, arson, malicious damage, and fraud.

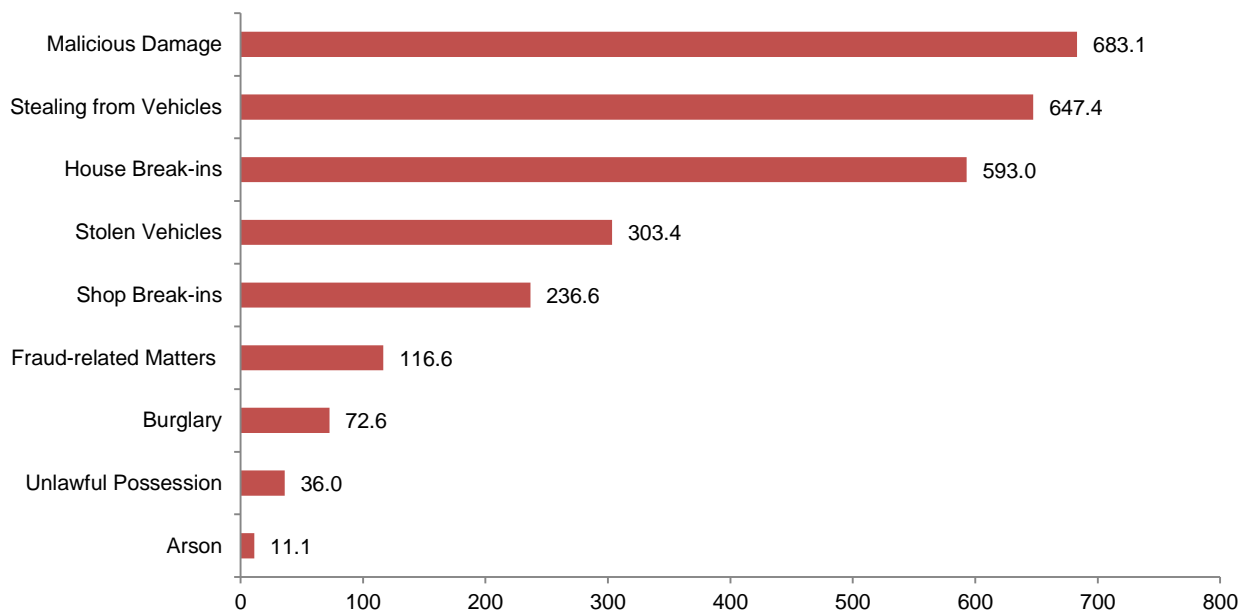
Figures 2 and 3 allow us to discern the different levels of each type of personal and property crime for 2013. In that year, the most commonly recorded crimes were assault (violent crime) and malicious damage (non-violent crime), and the least commonly recorded crimes were rape (violent crime) and arson (non-violent crime). It is important to remember, however, that assault and rape are notoriously underreported and thus both are likely to be significantly higher than what is captured in police statistics. Each of these crimes is examined individually in the remainder of this section.

**Figure 2: Crimes Against the Person – Rate per 100,000 Population in 2013**



Sources: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit. Rates per 100,000 population were calculated using population estimates (Medium Fertility) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

**Figure 3: Crimes Against Property – Rate per 100,000 Population in 2013**



Sources: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit. Rates per 100,000 population were calculated using population estimates (Medium Fertility) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

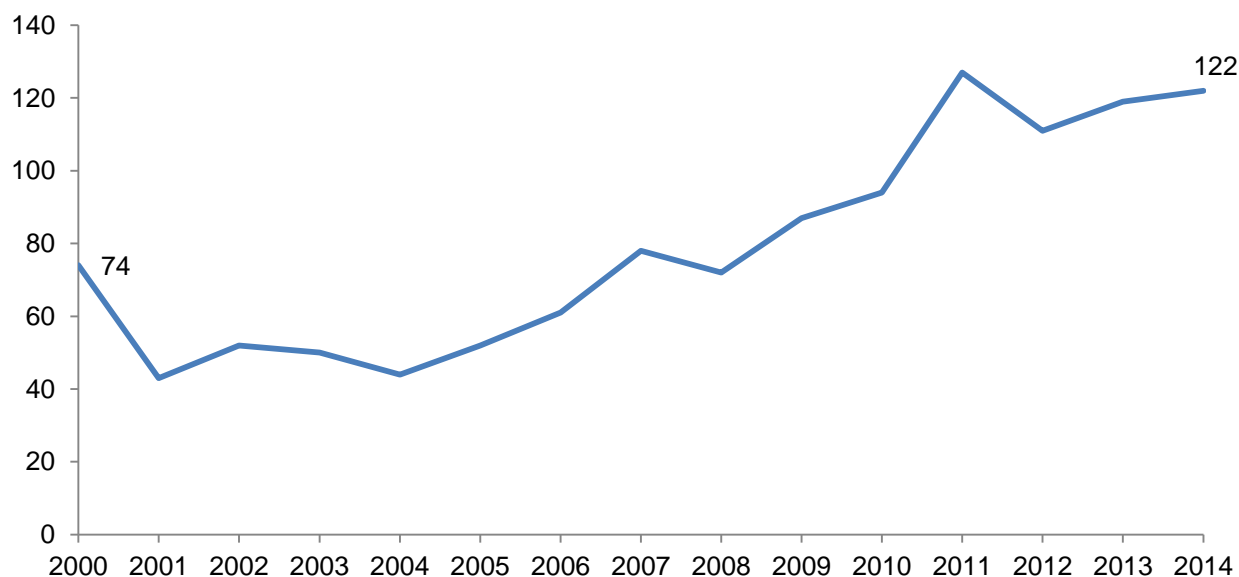
## Homicide

Homicides are the most commonly used and widely recognized indicator of the levels of violence within a society. However, these data are still not infallible. As seen in Figure 5, there are small discrepancies between homicide data collected by the police compared with mortality

data collected by the Ministry of Health. Accurately determining the cause of death is still a challenge in many developing countries that may have scarce time and resources to conduct crime scene investigations and autopsies. As a result, the causes of some deaths may be categorized as “unknown” or “undetermined.” However, the number of undetermined causes of death appears to be fairly low in The Bahamas.

Figure 4 shows the annual total number of murders in The Bahamas since 2000 according to the RBPF. It is important to note that the RBPF uses the term “murder” for classifying intentional violent deaths. However, special provisions in The Bahamas Penal Code allow for killings under certain circumstances (including self-defence and “under legal duty”)<sup>8</sup> to be excluded from the category of murder.<sup>9</sup> Caution should be used when comparing these data with homicide data from other countries, which often use homicide as a broader term meaning any intentional killing (independent of whether or not the killing was legal).

**Figure 4: Total Number of Murder Victims in The Bahamas, 2000–2014**



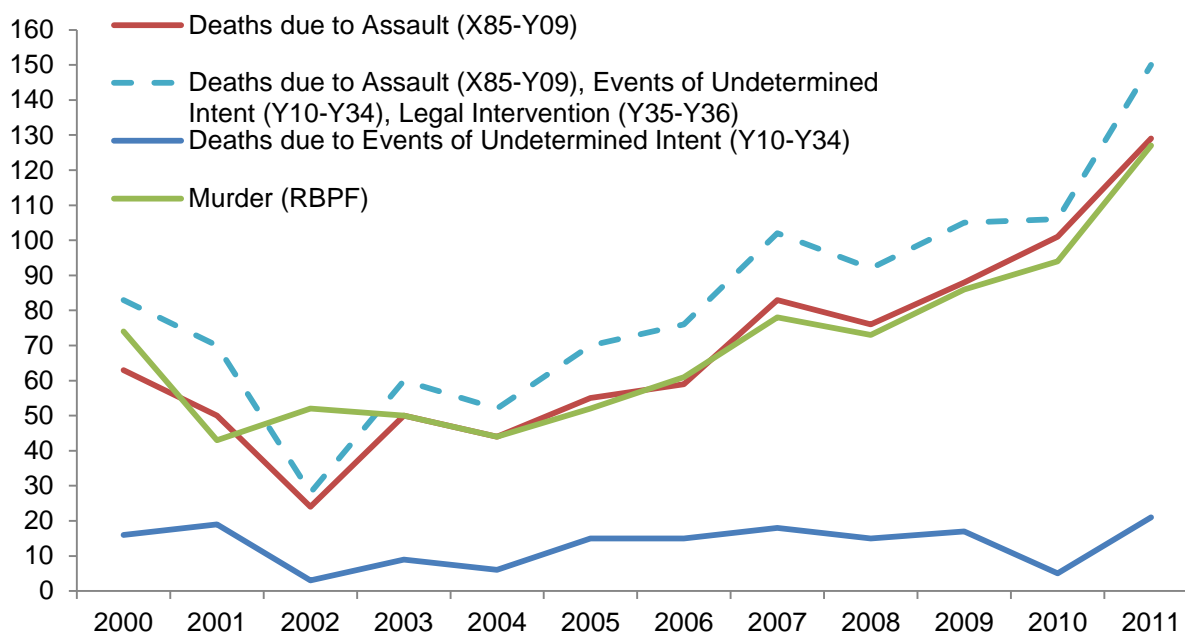
Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

Figure 5 compares RBPF murder statistics and data on Mortality due to Assault (ICD 10 X85-Y09) from The Bahamas Ministry of Health’s Health Information and Research Unit. The number of violent deaths with undetermined intent, while low, could indicate underreporting of homicides. Deaths due to external causes often require a pathologist to do an autopsy, and if the intention is not determined or not filled in by the pathologist, underreporting of murder or suicide can be the result. Additionally, the category of Legal Intervention includes those deaths that result from police and other law enforcement. While the numbers in this category are also low, these deaths are not included in the RBPF murder numbers. The blue dotted line in Figure 5 thus represents the potential number of deaths due to assault in The Bahamas if all deaths of undetermined intent were in fact inflicted by another person with intent to kill. This comparison shows that the numbers of actual homicides in the country may possibly be quite higher than the official police statistics.

<sup>8</sup> See Bahamas Penal Code, Item 299, p. 166.

<sup>9</sup> When asked to explain what is and is not included in murder statistics, the RBPF provided the legal definition from the Penal Code: “Whoever intentionally causes the death of another person by any unlawful harm is guilty of murder, unless his crime is reduced to manslaughter by reason of such extreme provocation, or other matter of partial excuse, as in this Title hereafter mentioned.”

**Figure 5: Total Murder Victims (RBPF), Total Mortality Due to Assault (Ministry of Health), and Violent Deaths Due to Events of Undetermined Intent (Ministry of Health), 2000–2011**



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Deaths due to Assault (X85-Y09)*	63	50	24	50	44	55	59	83	76	88	101	129
RBPF Murder	74	43	52	50	44	52	61	78	73	86	94	127
Deaths due to Events of Undetermined Intent (Y10-Y34)**	16	19	3	9	6	15	15	18	15	17	5	21
Deaths due to Legal Intervention (Y35-Y36)***	4	1	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
Combined Deaths due to Assault (X85-Y09), Events of Undetermined Intent (Y10-Y34), Legal Intervention (Y35-Y36)	83	70	28	60	52	70	76	102	92	105	106	150

Sources: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF), Strategic Policy and Planning Unit and Ministry of Health data prepared by the Health Information and Research Unit using mortality data for IDC-10 codes X85-Y36.

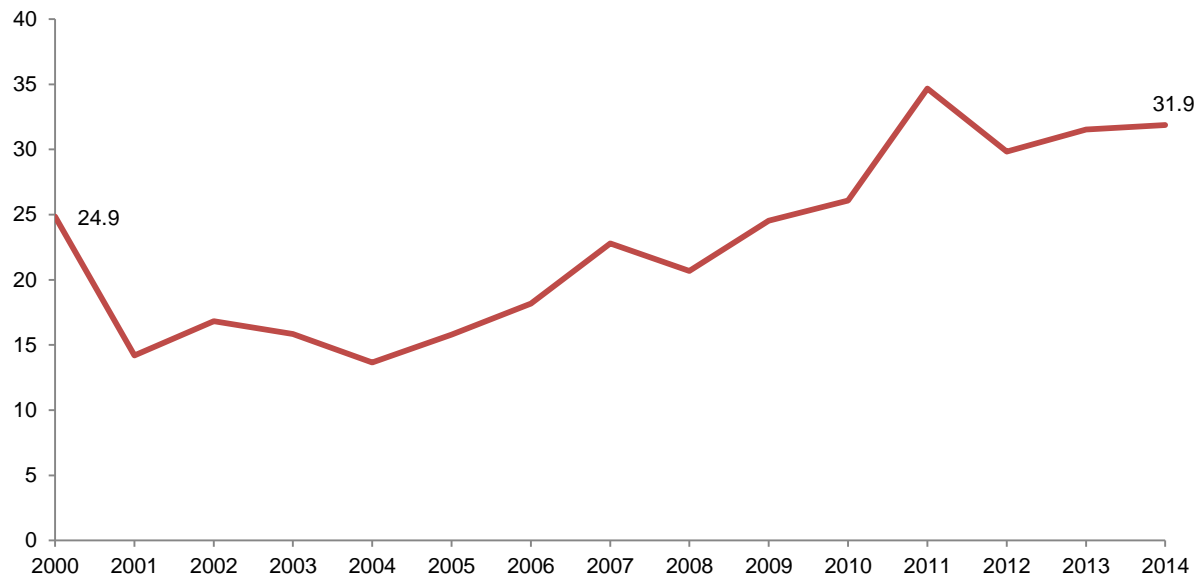
\* Deaths due to Assault include homicide or death from injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill.

\*\* Undetermined Intent (Y10-Y34) covers events where available information is insufficient to enable a medical or legal authority to make a distinction between accident, self-harm, and assault.

\*\*\* Legal Intervention (Y35-36) covers deaths from injuries inflicted by the police or other law enforcement agents, including military on duty, in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest lawbreakers, suppressing disturbances, maintaining order, and other legal action.

Note: The table below Figure 5 presents the specific numbers for the four categories of death tracked in the graphic (plus a category that combines three of those four categories collected by the Ministry of Health).

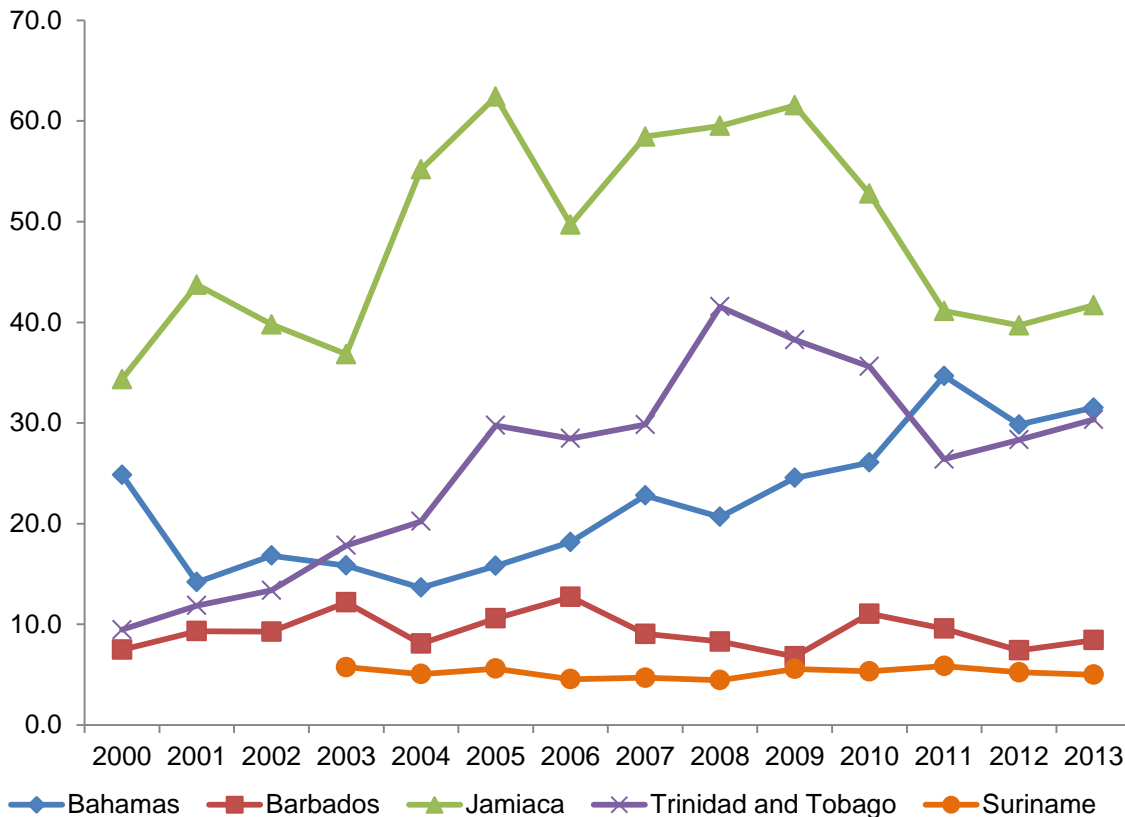
**Figure 6: Murder Rate per 100,000 Population, 2000–2014**



Sources: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit. The murder rate was calculated using population estimates (Medium Fertility) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

The murder rate per 100,000 population, calculated with RBPf data, is lower in the early 2000s, followed by a fairly steady increase from 2004 onward. In 2014, the homicide rate was 31.9 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the average homicide rate for the Caribbean region (16 per 100,000) and far above the global average of 6.2 per 100,000 (UNODC, 2014, pp 22-23). While Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have generally dominated regional attention in this area, homicides in The Bahamas surpassed Trinidad and Tobago in 2011 and are nearing the homicide rate of Jamaica. As seen in Figure 7, when compared with the homicide rate of four other Caribbean countries, The Bahamas shows a worrying trend. The homicide rate in The Bahamas has continued to climb, while rates in Barbados and Suriname have stayed constant at much lower levels, and rates in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica have experienced sharp declines since 2008 and 2009, respectively.

**Figure 7: Comparison of Intentional Homicide Rates per 100,000 Population in The Bahamas and Other Caribbean Countries, 2000–2013**



Sources: Numbers of reported homicide cases were provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit; the Jamaica Constabulary Force; the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service; the Suriname Police Corps; and the Royal Barbados Police Force. Homicide rates were calculated using population estimates (Medium Fertility) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

### **Who, Why, When, and Where?**

While the details surrounding each homicide can be crucial clues to detecting trends and formulating interventions, they are not always adequately captured by police data collection processes. The Bahamas is no exception. For a number of possible reasons (further explored in Section V), the data provided for this report were limited regarding the characteristics of the incident, the victim, and the perpetrator. Thus any generalizations should be approached with a high degree of caution.<sup>10</sup>

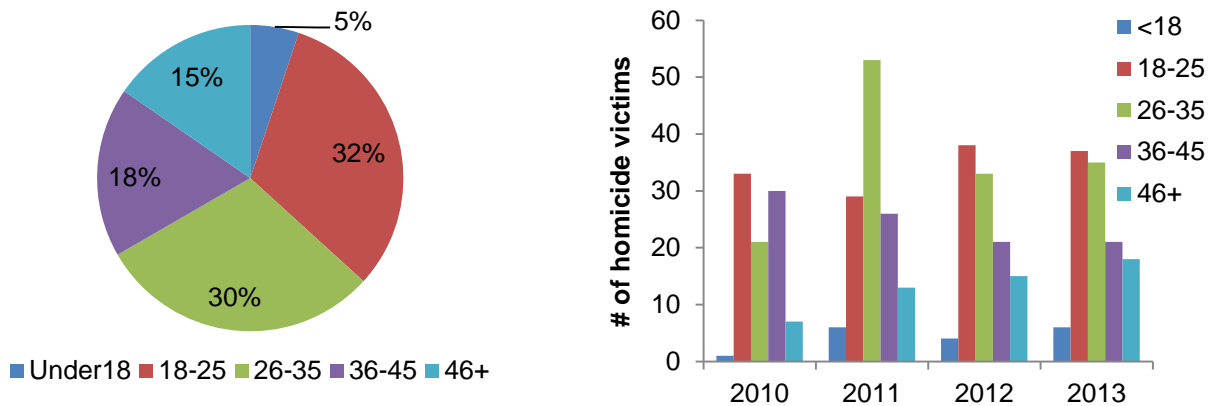
### **Murder Victims**

The profile of murder victims in The Bahamas is similar to what is found throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Murder victims are predominantly young males between the ages of 18 and 25 (Figure 8). However, it is important to note the increase in the numbers of victims in the 26-35 year-old category. In 2011, it was the increase specifically in this age group that was largely responsible for murders peaking at the all-time high of 127. These two age

<sup>10</sup> Complete micro datasets on incidents, perpetrators, and victims of murder were requested from The Bahamas Ministry of National Security but not provided. The analysis that follows is based on select figures provided by the RBPF.

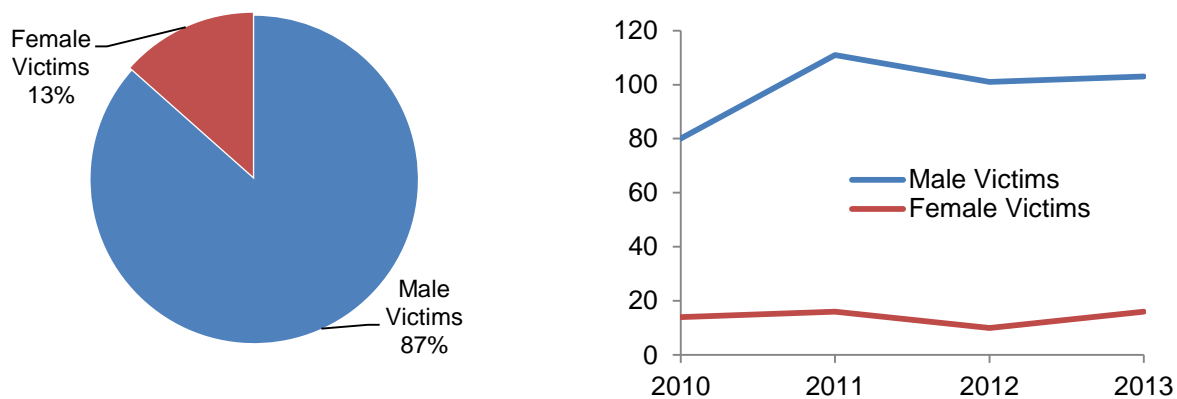
categories account for a disproportionately higher percentage of homicide victims than the overall population. Together they represent only 27 per cent of the overall population, but they account for 62 per cent of homicide victims and close to 50 per cent of the total prison population.<sup>11</sup> From 2009 to 2013, the number of male victims increased while the number of female victims remained fairly constant (showing a slight increase in 2013) (Figure 9). Although still representing a very small percentage of total murder victims, the number of victims under 18 increased, as did the numbers in nearly all other age categories with the exception of ages 35-46 (which decreased). From 2009 to 2013, 88 per cent of all homicide victims were Bahamian and 86 per cent were killed in New Providence.

**Figure 8: Percentage of Murder Victims by Age (2013) / Number of Victims by Age (2010–2013)**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

**Figure 9: Percentage of Murder Victims by Sex (2013) and Total Number of Victims by Sex (2010–2013)**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

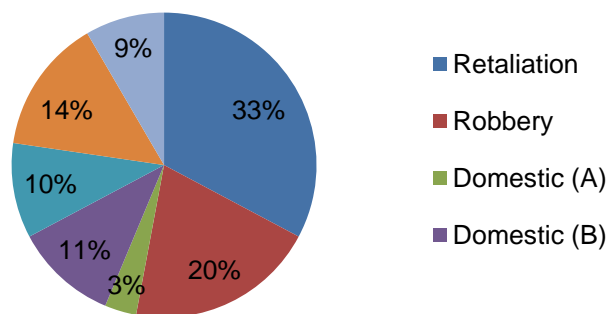
Unfortunately, far less is known about the perpetrators of murder than the victims.<sup>812</sup> Over the last five-year period for which data were available (2009–2013), nearly 12 per cent of perpetrators were either intimate partners (7.5 per cent) or family (4.3 per cent) of the victim. No information was available regarding how many perpetrators were known by the victims

<sup>11</sup> Calculated using data provided by the RBPF, The Department of Correctional Services, and Census 2010 data population by age (<http://statistics.bahamas.gov.bs/download/055424000.pdf>).

<sup>12</sup> Data requested from the RBPF on the profile of murder perpetrators (income, employment, geographical region, etc.) and their relationship to their victims were not provided.

(friends, acquaintances, neighbours, etc.). Although not specific to the crime of murder, some information can be gleaned from the 2010 survey of inmates at Foxhill Prison (Minnis et al., 2011).<sup>13</sup> A vast majority of inmates surveyed were male (95 per cent), between the ages of 20 and 30 (44 per cent), born in The Bahamas (93 per cent), and raised in New Providence (54 per cent). The majority (44 per cent) lived with their mother only, had between a 10th and 12th grade education (68 per cent), had dropped out of school (54 per cent), and were employed in semi-skilled jobs (62 per cent). Further information about the circumstances and intentions of perpetrators of murder can be found from the RBPF data on murder motives presented in Figures 10 and 11.

**Figure 10: Murder Motives, 2013 (percent)**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

Note: Domestic A includes murders resulting from family altercations, but not between significant others. Domestic B includes murders resulting from altercations between significant others. See Annex 4 for definitions of other categories.

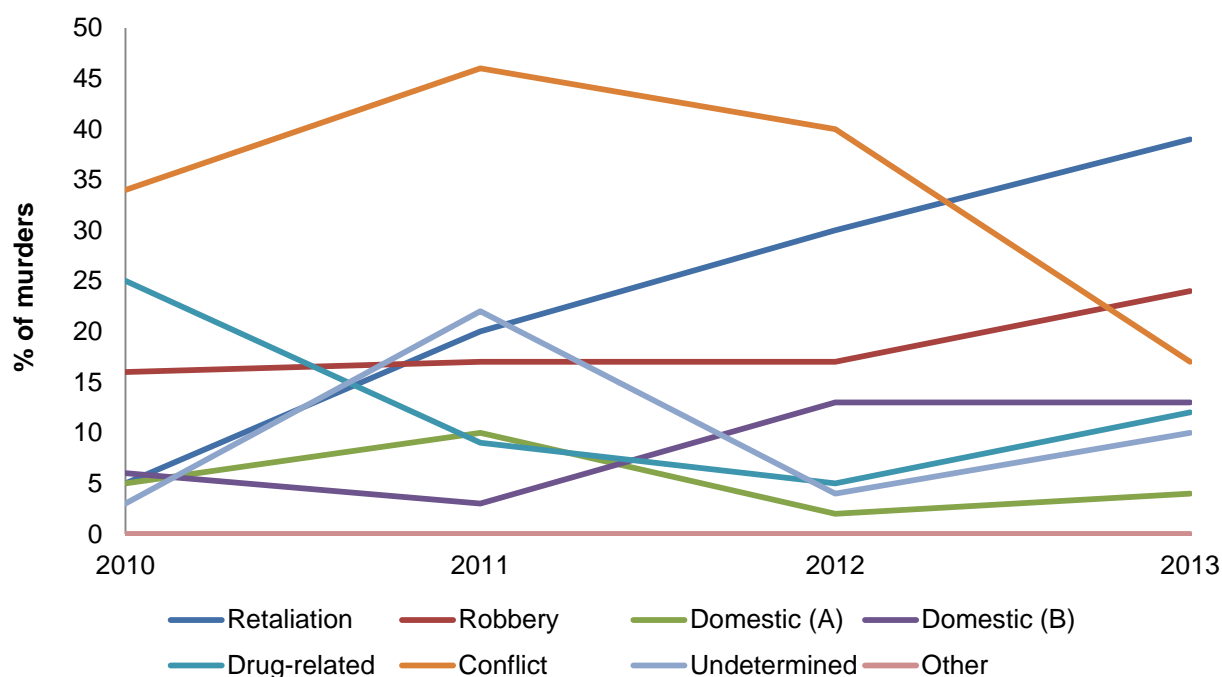
**Motives**

According to RBPF data, only 20 per cent of murders in 2013 were related to other criminal activities (drugs and robbery) (Figure 10). In contrast, 61 per cent of all murders appear to be related to a lack of conflict resolution mechanisms and anger management skills (retaliation, domestic violence and conflict). The high number of murders motivated by retaliation (33 per cent) may also reflect a lack of confidence and dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system to resolve crimes and disputes, which has led some individuals to take the law into their own hands. This distribution of murder motives suggests that improving the capacity of the justice system, as well as investing in conflict resolution at the community level, could have a significant impact on the murder rate.

<sup>13</sup> See the “The Department of Correctional Services and The Department of Correctional Services” subsection of Section III for more details.



**Figure 11: Murder Motives, 2010–2013 (percent)**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

Note: Domestic A includes murders resulting from family altercations, but not between significant others. Domestic B includes murders resulting from altercations between significant others. See Annex 4 for definitions of other categories.

Figure 11 shows the trends in murder motives from 2010 to 2013. Deaths resulting from conflict are considerably higher (although there is an apparent decrease in 2013) and murders motivated by retaliation consistently increased. Hanna (2011) initially sounded an alarm regarding the increase in retaliation murders over 2005–2009. Since that time retaliation murders have increased eight times over. This pattern may indicate a perpetual cycle of violence in which each violent murder becomes the justification for the next retaliation. Non-profit organizations working with victims of violence and their families and friends – such as The Family, The Crisis Centre and FOAM (Families Of All Murder Victims)<sup>14</sup> – agree that there is a clear need to interrupt the cycle of violence by helping survivors and their families deal with their trauma and reject retaliation. FOAM estimates that 35 of 50 cases the organization is currently dealing with are retaliation killings. Many murders the organization deals with result from fights over girlfriends or friends, as well as family and siblings seeking revenge for violence or wrongdoing against loved ones. Interviewees expressed the view that this was in part a reaction to the inefficiency of the judicial system to provide justice.

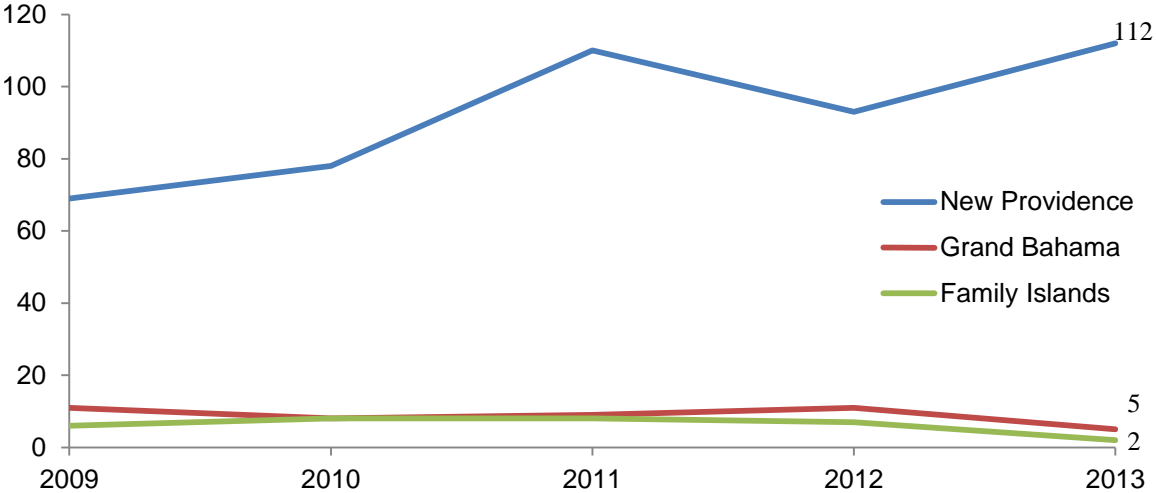
Additionally, in 2013 murders from robberies surpassed those motivated by conflict for the first time. This is consistent with the data presented later in this report that suggest an increasing trend in armed robberies. Finally, murders resulting from domestic violence between intimate partners show that this type of violence was increasingly deadly to victims in 2012 and 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Interviews on February 19 and 20, 2014.

**Where Murders Occur**

Over the last five-year period for which data were available (2009-2013), 86 per cent of all recorded murders occurred in New Providence (Figure 12). This is not surprising considering that approximately 70 per cent of the Bahamian population lives there, according to 2010 census data. Between 2012 and 2013 the percentage of murders in New Providence increased.

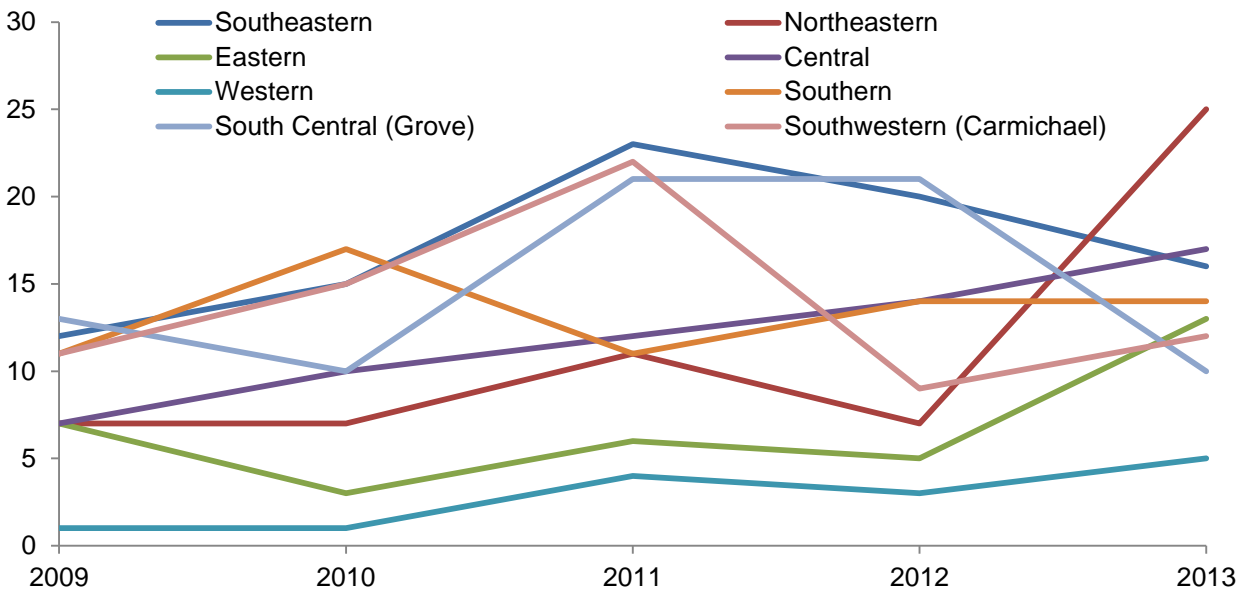
**Figure 12: Total Recorded Murder Victims by Geographical Region, 2009–2013**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

The Bahamas is divided into three policing districts (New Providence, Grand Bahamas, and Family Islands) and 10 policing divisions. The New Providence districts (eight) that had the highest number of homicides in 2013 were the Central, Northeastern and Southeastern districts (Figure 13). While the number of murders in the Southeastern, Southwestern, and South Central districts nearly doubled the between 2009 and 2011, the numbers in the Southwestern and Southeastern districts dropped significantly after 2011. The South Central district experienced a similar decrease from 2012 to 2013. Murders in the Central, Eastern, and Western districts have been increasing since 2009.

**Figure 13: Murders by Police Divisions in New Providence**



	Southeastern	Northeastern	Eastern	Central	Western	Southern	South Central (Grove)	Southwestern (Carmichael)
2009	12	7	7	7	1	11	13	11
2010	15	7	3	10	1	17	10	15
2011	23	11	6	12	4	11	21	22
2012	20	7	5	14	3	14	21	9
2013	16	25	13	17	5	14	10	12

Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

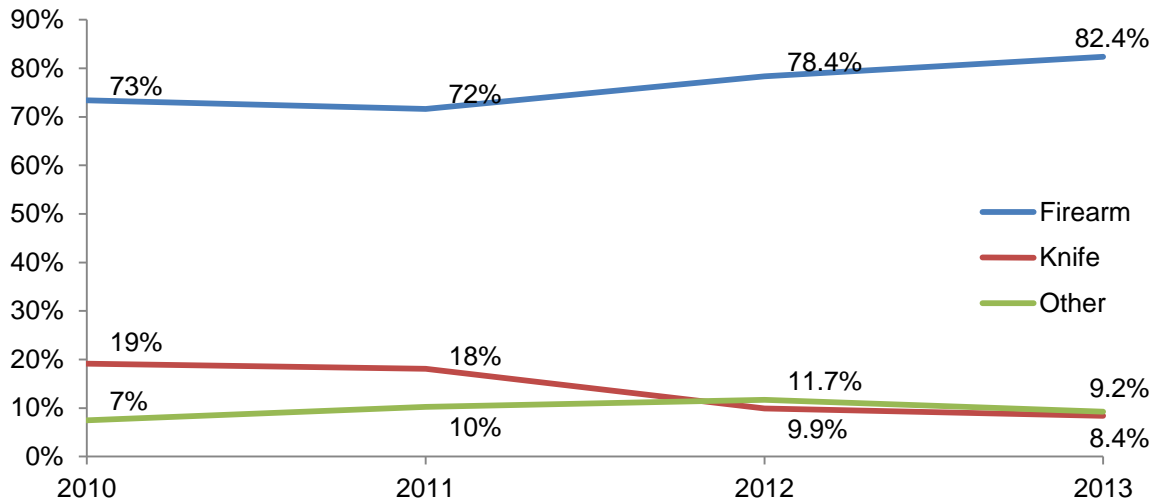
Note: The table below Figure 13 presents the specific statistics for each of the regions tracked in the graphic. The population of each police district was unavailable at the time of this report, thus impeding the calculation of the murder rate per 100,000 population by police district.

### **Weapons**

The weapon responsible for most homicides in The Bahamas has long been the firearm. Between 2005 and 2009, Hanna (2011) reported that firearms were used in 61 per cent of all murders. As shown in Figure 14, murders committed with a firearm have continued to increase. Firearms were responsible for 76.5 per cent of all murders between 2010 and 2013. In 2013, 82 per cent of all murders were committed with a firearm. The number of firearms legally registered in The Bahamas, according to the RBPF, is 20,110. Although The Bahamas does not manufacture firearms, the estimated rate of gun ownership per 100 population ranges from 6.48 (based on legal guns and population) (Alpers and Wilson, 2010) to 8.8 (based on survey data) (Hutcheson et al., 2011). Data on the types of guns most frequently used in homicides after 2010 were not provided for this study. However, Hanna (2011) indicates that while only a small

number of individuals hold licenses for handguns,<sup>15</sup> handguns were the most commonly used firearms in homicides (83 per cent) from 2005–2009.

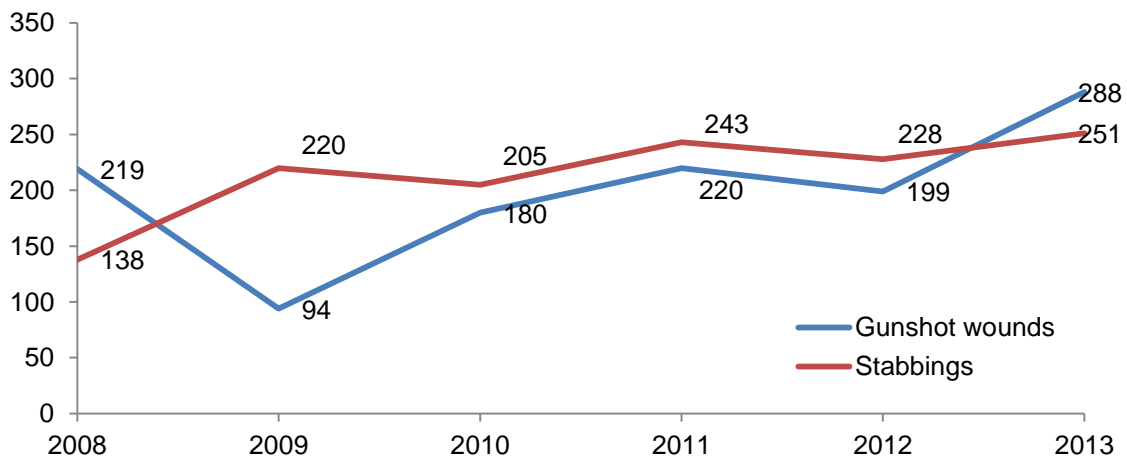
**Figure 14: Percentage of Murders by Weapon, 2010–2013 (per cent)**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit.

Although more individuals die when a firearm is used, this does not mean that firearms are used more frequently in violent attacks. In fact, emergency room data from Princess Margaret’s Hospital show that (1) the number of injuries from stabbings and shootings are far higher than the number of murders, and (2) while guns may be more lethal, stabbings are nearly equally as frequent as shootings (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Gunshot Wounds and Stabbings Treated at Princess Margaret Hospital Emergency Room, 2008–2013**



Source: Data from the emergency room at Princess Margaret Hospital supplied by the Statistics Unit of the Public Hospital Authority.

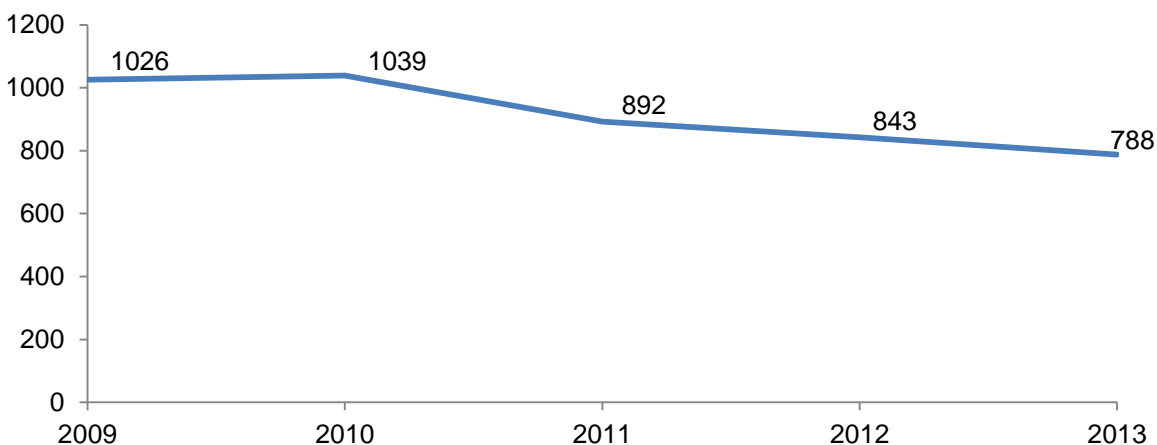
<sup>15</sup> According to Hanna (2011, p. 27), “Special licenses to own or carry a handgun are only granted by the Cabinet on the advice of the Police Commissioner. Needless to say, only a small number of Bahamians are legally authorized to have handguns in their possession. Holders of handguns are typically business owners.”

As is clear from Figure 15, knife wounds were treated even more frequently than gunshot wounds between 2009 and 2012. Although gunshot wounds surpassed knife wounds in 2013, the impact of knives should not be underestimated or ignored when forming violence prevention policies. Each of these stabbings and shootings had the potential to end in murder. Injuries from violent attacks that do not result in death are examined in more detail in the following section.

## Assault and Injuries

It is equally as important to examine assaults that end in injury instead of death. In fact, it may only be the availability of a gun, or the quality and proximity of the nearest hospital, that determines if an assault becomes a murder. Unfortunately, the number of assaults reported to the police are generally far less representative of the actual assaults that have occurred than homicide records are of actual homicides. Gaps and discrepancies occur for many reasons, including embarrassment, reluctance to involve the police, or the potential consequences of reporting. Police statistics can be complemented by observing data from public health sources, although the latter generally include only the most severe assaults requiring medical attention. However, data from public health sources can at least help us understand the more grievous cases of assault.

**Figure 16: Assault Rate per 100,000 Population, 2009–2013**



Sources: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit. The assault rate was calculated using population estimates (Medium Fertility) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

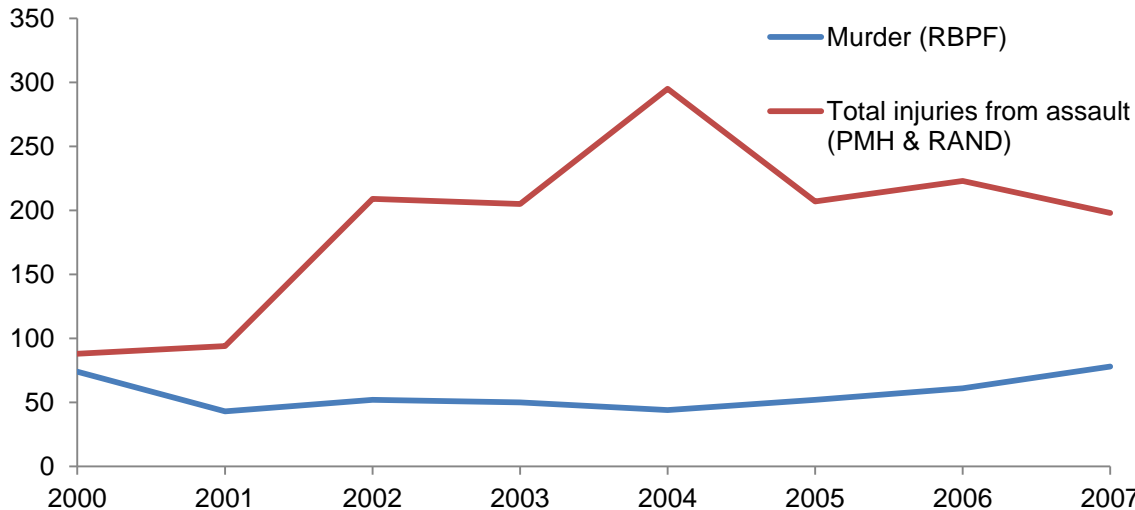
The RBPF defines “assault” according to the Penal Code to include “(a) assault and battery; (b) assault without actual battery; (c) imprisonment, or detention and compulsion.” Although there was a slight decrease in reported assaults from 2010 to 2013, the average assault rate per 100,000 population for the five-year period (918), and the rate in 2013 (788), remain relatively high for the region. It is also important to remember that a decline in reported cases of assault may have more to do with reluctance to report (or lack of confidence in the police) than an actual reduction in assault cases.<sup>16</sup>

Data on injuries treated at hospitals from assault give us a better picture of how many cases of assault result in serious injury (that is, injuries that require medical attention). In The Bahamas, data on injuries resulting from assault are recorded using the same coding system as homicides

<sup>16</sup> The percentage of assaults related to domestic violence is examined further in the subsequent subsection of this report specifically dedicated to that topic.

– ICD-10. According to the ICD code, the category of assault “includes homicides and injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means.” Figure 17 presents the most recent available data from public hospitals on inpatient injuries due to assault, excluding those that ended in death (homicide). It is evident from the figure that the number of assaults resulting in serious injury, with intent to harm or kill, is far higher than the number of murders.

**Figure 17: Inpatient Injuries due to Assault (Public Hospital Authority) versus Murder (RBPF), 2000–2007**



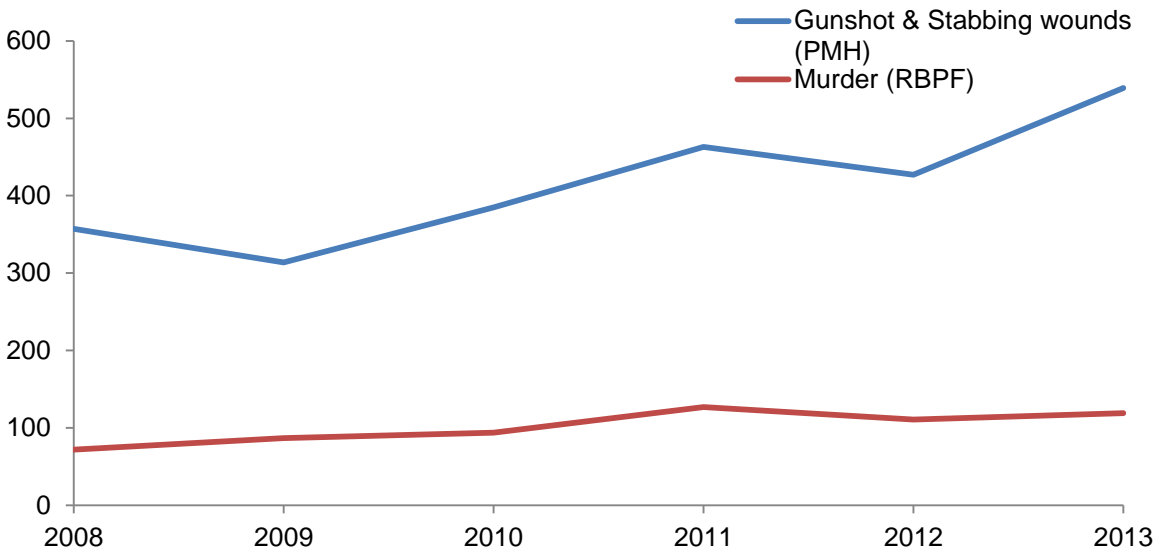
Sources: Statistics Unit, Corporate Office, Public Hospital Authority (April 2014); and the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF).

Note: Includes only patients admitted to the Princess Margaret (PMH) and RAND Hospitals. Data do not include those who died in or were treated in the emergency rooms but never admitted as inpatients. Morbidity data are only available for PMH through 2007.

Unfortunately, data from the Public Hospital Authority of The Bahamas could only be provided up until 2007. Severe difficulties in the collection of morbidity data at the Princess Margaret Hospital have impeded the release of recent morbidity data from inpatients.<sup>17</sup> However, Figure 18 gives more recent data on gunshot wounds and stabbings treated in the Princess Margaret Hospital emergency room. The figure shows that the number of gunshot and stabbing wounds far outweighs the number of murders in The Bahamas. For example, although there were 119 murders in 2013, there were 4.5 times as many stabbings and shootings. Stabbings and shootings appear to be increasing at an even higher rate than murder.

<sup>17</sup> See Section V for more details.

**Figure 18: Murders versus Gunshot and Stab Wounds Treated at Princess Margaret Hospital, 2008–2013**



Sources: Statistics Unit, Corporate Office, Public Hospital Authority (April 2014); and the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF).

Note: Includes emergency room data from Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) only on gunshot and stabbing wounds reported to the police. The intent of gunshot wounds and stabbing wounds is undetermined and may include accidental and self-inflicted harm in addition to assault.

## Violence in the Home

While the home is typically thought of as a place of love and safety, Bahamian homes may be just as dangerous as the streets, especially for women and children. In 2013, RBPF figures show that 14 per cent of all homicides resulted from domestic violence.<sup>18</sup> According to police records, between 2009 and 2013 nearly 12 per cent of murder perpetrators were intimate partners or family (7.5 per cent the former and 4.3 per cent the latter) of the victim. However, this is merely the tip of the iceberg. Domestic violence includes not only murders, but other physical, physiological, and emotional abuse between intimate partners, parents, and children, and between siblings and other family members.

The Bahamas has been slow to recognize physical and sexual assault against women and children by intimate partners or family as crimes. The Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act was only approved in 2007 and still contains flaws in its design and implementation, according to some specialists (see Section III). Furthermore, despite growing evidence of domestic violence (14 per cent of homicides and 28 per cent of assaults), there was no mention of domestic violence or gender in the police commissioner’s annual Policing Plans between 2011 and 2014. Although domestic violence is mentioned in the government’s Project Safe Bahamas, and the Prime Minister appointed the National Task Force to address Gender-based Violence in July 2013, real action on this front has yet to materialize. Many new initiatives are

<sup>18</sup> Note that the term “domestic violence” has fallen into disuse by scholars who study violence internationally. The term has largely been replaced in the literature by more specific terms such as “family violence,” “intimate partner violence,” or “violence against women” (since the great majority of victims of gender-based violence are female). However, the term continues to be used in this section of this report because that is how it is largely referred to by the police and social services in The Bahamas.

under way to increase police training in this area, but police data collection on this type of violence has only recently been given more serious attention.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the slow pace of addressing domestic violence as a crime, it has long been a problem in The Bahamas. Unlike violent or criminal acts committed by a stranger, domestic violence increases the vulnerability of the victim and the opportunity for repeated victimization. According to The Bahamas Crisis Centre, social and psychological barriers often cause victims and other family members to keep domestic violence a secret. Dependence (financial or otherwise) on the perpetrator often contributes to repeated abuse. Finally, domestic violence can affect multiple family members for many generations.

Although no national surveys on victimization by intimate partners or family violence were identified for this study, the 2011 Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey and two consecutive surveys of college students conducted by researchers at the College of The Bahamas<sup>20</sup> collected data on violence in the home. Although sampling methodologies generally do not allow for extrapolating results to the wider population, all three studies found similar percentages of respondents living in homes with domestic violence: 21.2 per cent (National-Anti Drug Secretariat and Ministry of National Security, 2012), 21 per cent (Plumridge and Fielding, 2009), and 23 per cent (Brennen et al., 2010).

Burnett-Garraway (2001) also found that of 313 women interviewed at random times at the Accident and Emergency Department of Nassau's Princess Margaret Hospital, 40.3 per cent reported having been physically abused, 22.4 per cent sexually abused, and 39 per cent verbally abused at some point in their lifetime. The perpetrator was generally a boyfriend or husband and risk factors for victims included younger age, being single, low level of education, substance use, economic hardship, and crowding in the home (Burnett-Garraway, 2001).

The limited data presented here on domestic violence in The Bahamas were provided by the RBPF, Ministry of Social Services and Community Development, and The Bahamas Crisis Centre. Data specifically on violence of a sexual nature is examined further in the subsequent subsection on sexual violence.

Acts of domestic violence that do not result in the death of the victim, when they are reported to the police, are recorded under the category of assault. More serious physical assaults are recorded separately as either:

- *Causing harm* - "Whoever intentionally and unlawfully causes harm<sup>21</sup> or a wound to any person either with or without any weapon or instrument," or
- *Causing grievous harm* – "Any harm which amounts to a maim or dangerous harm as hereinafter defined, or which seriously or permanently injures health, or which is likely so to injure health, or which extends to permanent disfigurement or to any external or internal organ, member or sense."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> With the creation of the inter-agency Gender-based Violence Task Force, the RBPF became an integral participant in this process and is currently combing through years of police data to separate out, analyse, and generate statistics on domestic violence and gender-based crimes.

<sup>20</sup> See Plumridge and Fielding (2009) and Brennen et al. (2010).

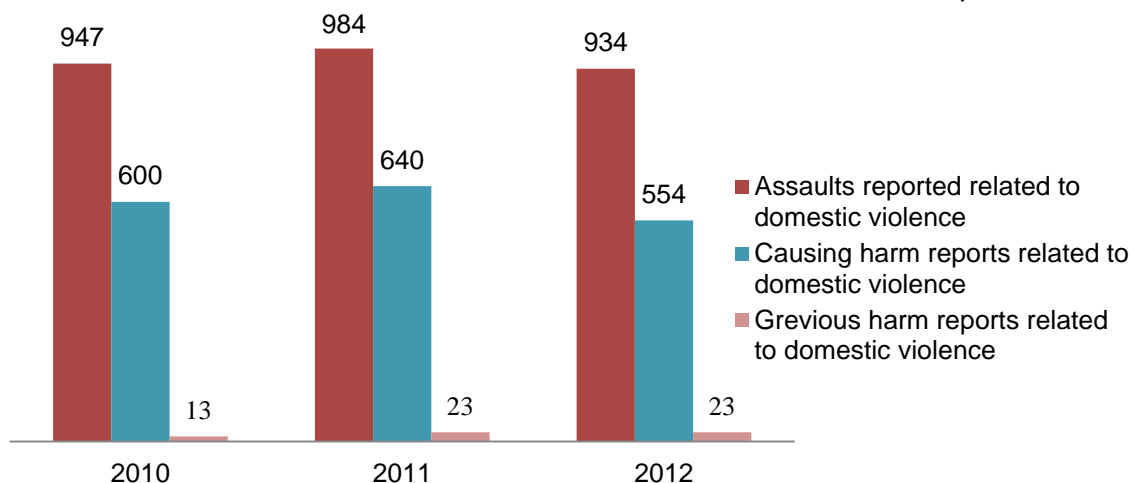
<sup>21</sup> "Harm" means any bodily hurt, disease, or disorder, whether permanent or temporary.

<sup>22</sup> The source of this text is the Royal Bahamas Police Force.



According to police statistics from 2010–2012, “domestic-related” reports<sup>23</sup> represented an average of 28 per cent of all reported assaults, 26 per cent of cases of causing harm, and 18 per cent of cases of causing grievous harm (Figure 19). These reports are likely far fewer than the actual number of incidents occurring in The Bahamas. Burnett-Garraway (2001) found that while the women interviewed at Princess Margaret Hospital for that study were comfortable disclosing abuse to health care workers, only about half reported the last incident of physical abuse to the police.

**Figure 19: Assaults due to Domestic Violence between Intimate Partners, 2010–2012**



Source: Data supplied by the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

Awareness of the high incidence of domestic violence led to the opening of The Bahamas Crisis Centre in 1982. The centre began as a non-profit shelter for battered women, but later opened its doors to men and widened its scope of services. When the centre began keeping statistics in 1996, it recorded 306 clients who received services for physical abuse (adult and child), incest, rape, sexual molestation, and marital problems. In 2013, the centre served 1,312 people for a wider variety of issues (Table 1).<sup>24</sup> As shown in Figure 20, it is interesting to note is not only the increased number of clients seeking services, but also the new array of issues related to domestic violence with which the centre is dealing.

**Table 1: Number of New and Total Clients at the Bahamas Crisis Centre, 2007–2013**

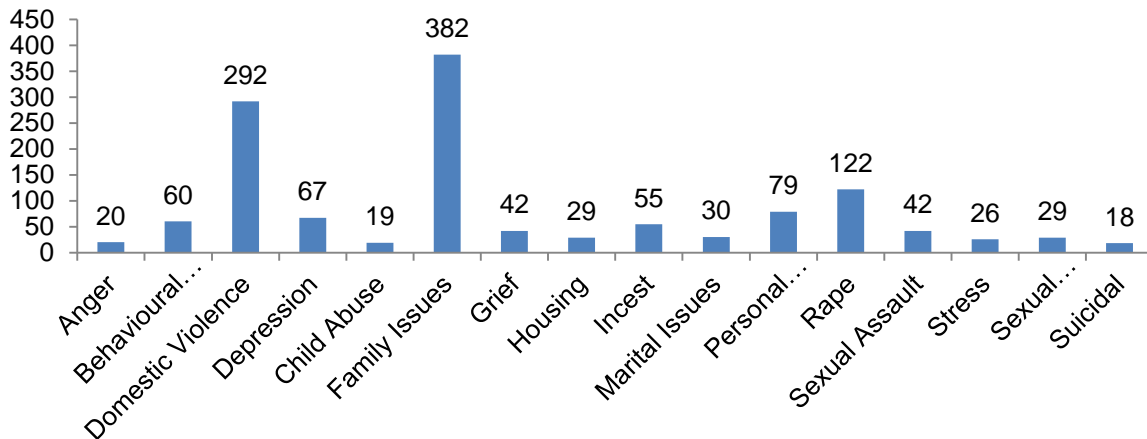
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
New Clients	204	209	241	254	226	272	264
Total Clients	770	892	913	1,148	1,285	1,266	1,312

Source: Unpublished data provided by The Bahamas Crisis Centre.

<sup>23</sup> Defined by the RBPF as reports that refer to “those incidents arising as a result of arguments, disputes and altercations related to issues of intimate partner relationship (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend).”

<sup>24</sup> Of those served, 264 were new cases in 2013 and 1,048 were continued cases from previous years.

**Figure 20: Individuals Treated by The Bahamas Crisis Centre by Issue Identified on Intake Forms, 2013**



Source: Unpublished data provided by The Bahamas Crisis Centre.

The Bahamas Crisis Centre's 2011 Statistics Report (p. 1) clearly explains the complex and interconnected nature of the problems surrounding family violence in The Bahamas:

"Mrs. A may present and be diagnosed as having a 'family problem.' She may also be experiencing verbal and/or emotional abuse from her husband, stress from her employer, depression from having to live with her mother-in-law due to financial problems; all of which result in her physically abusing her son, who has been acting up at school. Further investigation might reveal that her husband, as a child, witnessed his father abusing his mother and Mrs. A herself may have been verbally abused by her mother. Yet, as a statistic, she has a 'family problem'."

Plumridge and Fielding (2009, p. 52) found that the presence of domestic violence in a household in The Bahamas was also associated with risks (odds ratios) of deviant behaviours, including sexual abuse of household members and the intentional harming of pets. They suggest that hitting pets to discipline them, if learnt at a young age, may be transferred to humans when children become adults. Conversely, harming of pets in the home could also be used as an indicator of domestic violence, and "cross-reporting" protocols for animal cruelty and social services could be examined.

Other studies show there are potential long-term harmful effects on children who witness or become victims of violence. Fielding (2012, pp. 3-4) finds that inmates at Foxhill Prison were typically brought up in homes with higher levels of violence than the general population. Of 310 inmates who responded to a questionnaire, 112 (36 per cent) were victims of abuse and 49.2 per cent said that they had observed violence in their homes. Such information suggests that initiatives to curb domestic violence could have long-term effects on crime and violence, both within and outside the home.

### ***Child Abuse and Corporal Punishment***

Bahamians were shocked and outraged by the 2011 case of 11-year-old Marco Archer, who was molested and killed gruesomely by a former sex offender. The case resulted in the passing

of Marco's Law in 2013 (see subsequent section on laws), which, among other provisions, increases the punishment for child abuse and creates the mandate for a sex offender's registry.

However, when it comes to violence against children in the home, the definition of abuse for Bahamians is far less clear and is likely only to be reported in the most severe cases. The tenuous line between what is considered acceptable "discipline" versus unacceptable "abuse" of children makes it difficult to understand and measure the true prevalence of child abuse in The Bahamas. Bahamian interpretations of what constitutes violence and abuse are important particularly when interpreting the data on abuse collected from surveys and through administrative data.

The popularity of the Christian biblical reference, "spare the rod and spoil the child" in The Bahamas may be illustrative of the cultural acceptance of this method of disciplining children.<sup>25</sup> While the country has laws protecting children from abuse,<sup>26</sup> research suggests that the perception of Bahamians regarding what constitutes abuse may be different from what is specified in law. One study conducted by researchers at the College of The Bahamas included detailed interviews with Bahamians on their perceptions of physical violence and abuse. It found that violence was regarded as abuse only when it resulted in severe physical harm to the victim (Brennen, et al., 2010). The same study included a survey of 933 college students and found that hitting a child often was not clearly considered abuse (the association between "abuse" and "hitting" was only significant at the  $p = 0.069$  level). Participants in the study also appeared reluctant to report abuse to the authorities.

The same study also found that many children were physically hurt as a result of discipline. Children were spanked in 77 per cent of homes where children were present and domestic violence was found in 23 per cent of homes (Brennen, et al., 2010, p. 1). A correlation was found between homes where children were said to be "spanked often" and domestic violence in the home (Fisher's exact test,  $p < 0.001$ ) (Brennen, et al., 2010, p. 10). The 2011 Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey found that 43.8 per cent of all students surveyed self-reported having been emotionally or verbally abused in the past, 21.2 per cent had been physically abused, and 9 per cent sexually abused. Female students were significantly more likely than male students to have been emotionally, physically, or sexually abused (National Anti-Drug Secretariat and Ministry of National Security, 2012, p. 23).

By law, anyone who "has information indicating that a child is suffering or has suffered significant harm" is obligated to report it to the Director of Child and Welfare Services (particularly those working in public health, schools, and the police force).<sup>27</sup> However, Brennen et al. (2010, p. 13) note that respondents in their study were unlikely to report abuse, perhaps because of reluctance to bring authorities into the business of their neighbours. Given the perception that only severe physical harm is considered to be abuse, and the reluctance to report abuse to authorities, the number of cases of abuse reported to the Department of Social Services (Figure 21) is likely highly under-representative of the actual number of cases.

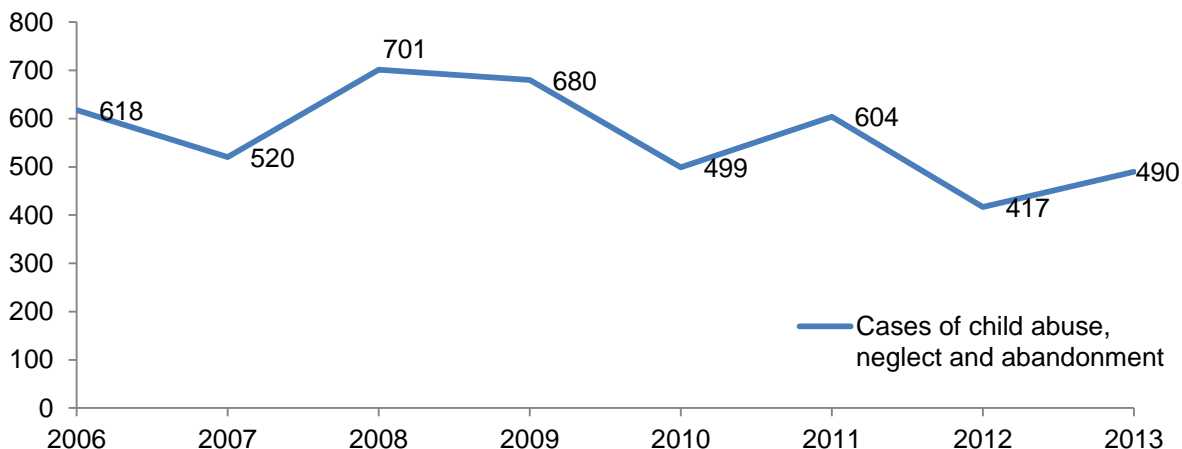
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<sup>25</sup> In addition to being commonly referred to in interviews for this study, the common use of the phrase has been noted in other publications such as Brennen et al. (2010), Ballance (2008), and Tertullien (2002).

<sup>26</sup> The Bahamas has laws to protect children against an abuser who "wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes him [the child], or causes or permits him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health including injury to or loss of sight, or hearing, or limb, or organ of the body, and any mental derangement" (Children Protection Act, 2007, [CH. 132-34], paragraph 62).

<sup>27</sup> The Bahamas. Child Protection Act 2007 (CH. 132-34), paragraph 63.

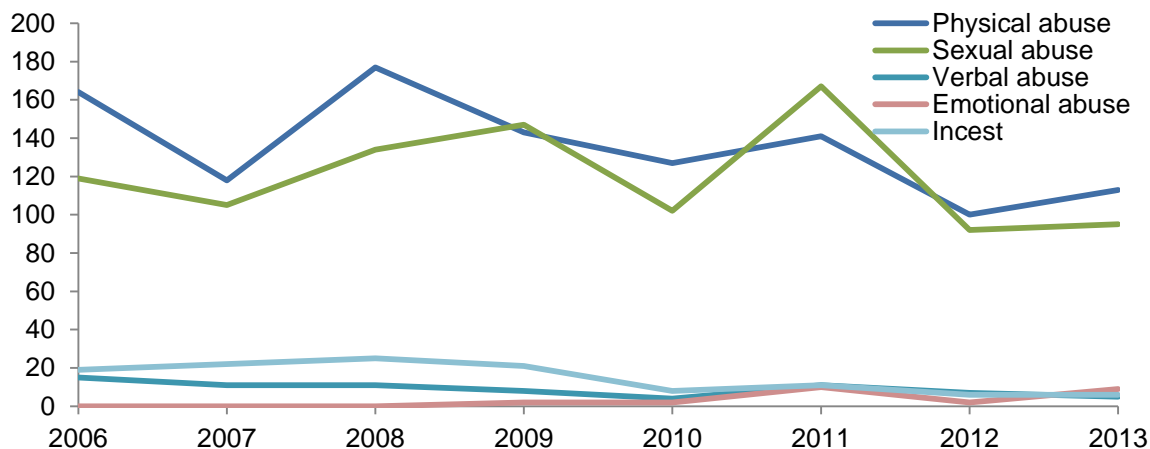
**Figure 21: New Reported and Re-opened Cases of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Abandonment Handled by the Department of Social Services, 2006–2013**



Source: Data provided by The Bahamas Department of Social Services Child Protection/Child Care Facilities Division.

Figure 22 shows that the most commonly reported types of abuse are physical and sexual. Again, this is likely not a reflection of the fact that there are fewer actual cases of verbal and emotional abuse, but rather that they are less likely to be considered abuse and reported. Programmes and services to identify and support victims of child abuse are discussed further in Section III of this report.

**Figure 22: Types of Child Abuse Reported to the Department of Social Services, 2006–2013**



Source: Data provided by The Bahamas Department of Social Services Child Protection/Child Care Facilities Division.

An additional source of information on child abuse is the National Child Abuse Hotline (see Section IV for more details). Table 2 shows the number of calls received from 2011 to 2013 broken down by issue. Of the 761 calls received by the hotline during this period, the highest numbers regarded neglect (24 per cent), physical abuse (18 per cent), and sexual abuse (11 per cent).

**Table 2: Number and Type of Calls Received by the National Child Abuse Hotline, 2011–2013**

Type	2011	2012	2013	Total 2011–2013
Custody	4	2	4	10
Access			1	1
Abandonment	5	4	1	10
Shelter	19	22	20	61
Missing Child		1		1
Sexual Abuse	24	32	26	82
Incest	2	1	1	4
Physical Abuse	55	39	46	140
Neglect	74	44	62	180
Verbal Abuse	7	7	8	22
Emotional Abuse		1	2	3
Psychological Abuse		1		1
Behavioural Problems	12	8	15	35
Rape		2		2
Domestic Violence	17	9	5	31
Family Problems		1		1
Marital Problems	3	2	2	7
Counselling	13	3	3	19
Depression	11	4		15
Stress	11		3	14
Suicide	11	6	17	34
Financial Assistance	8	3		11
Fire Victim		1	2	3
Information seeking	6	17	26	49
Other	16	7	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>761</b>

Source: Data provided by the National Child Abuse Hotline

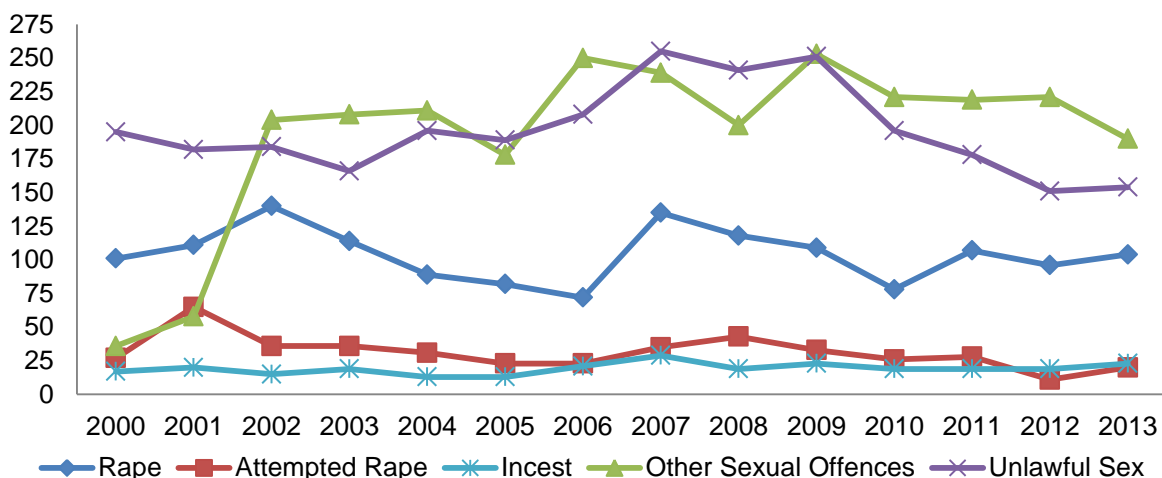
## Sexual Violence

Incidents of sexual violence are more difficult to count and analyse than most other violent incidents. Global estimates are that between 60 and 95 per cent of sexual crimes go unreported (depending on the crime and the country), and that even those reported are unlikely to be prosecuted.<sup>28</sup> Bahamian society's categorization of sexual acts as criminal or culturally

<sup>28</sup> The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) reports that 60 per cent of rapes in the United States go unreported, based on data from the U.S. Justice Department's 2008–2012 National Crime Victimization Survey (<http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates>). A UK study found that between 75 and 95 per cent of rapes went unreported (Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2007).

acceptable has varied over time. For example, a non-consensual sexual attack by a stranger in The Bahamas has long been considered a crime. However, under Bahamian law, marital rape was not a crime until 2007. Currently it is only a crime if there has been a prior petition or agreement for separation.<sup>29</sup> According to data provided by the RBPF, 29 per cent of rapes in 2013 were committed by acquaintances of the victim, 3 per cent by family members, and 4 per cent by current or former intimate partners. Given that most sexual violence occurs between acquaintances or intimates, there are likely obstacles to reporting and recording these acts within the criminal justice system. Therefore, alternative data sources, such as cases treated in Bahamian emergency rooms and by non-governmental organizations, were also sought to complement police data presented in Figure 23.

**Figure 23: Cases of Sexual Violence (Rape, Attempted Rape, Incest, Unlawful Sex, and Other Sexual Offences), 2000–2013**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF).

Note: According to the RBPF, “Other Sexual Offences” includes “Buggery, Unlawful Carnal Knowledge, Attempted Unlawful Sexual Intercourse, Unnatural Sexual Intercourse, Attempted Incest, Unlawful Sex with Mentally Ill Person, Indecent Exposure.”

## Rape

Rape is largely considered to be the most underreported violent crime, making measuring its prevalence extremely difficult.<sup>30</sup> Even when reported, it is important to remember that the fluctuations in the number of rapes reported to the police may indicate either an increase in sexual violence, an increase in reporting (perhaps due to more confidence in the police force or improved laws), or improvements in the data collection and registry system.

According to RBPF figures, the average reported rape rate in The Bahamas over 2009–2013 was approximately 27 per 100,000 population.<sup>31</sup> This number is relatively high compared to the

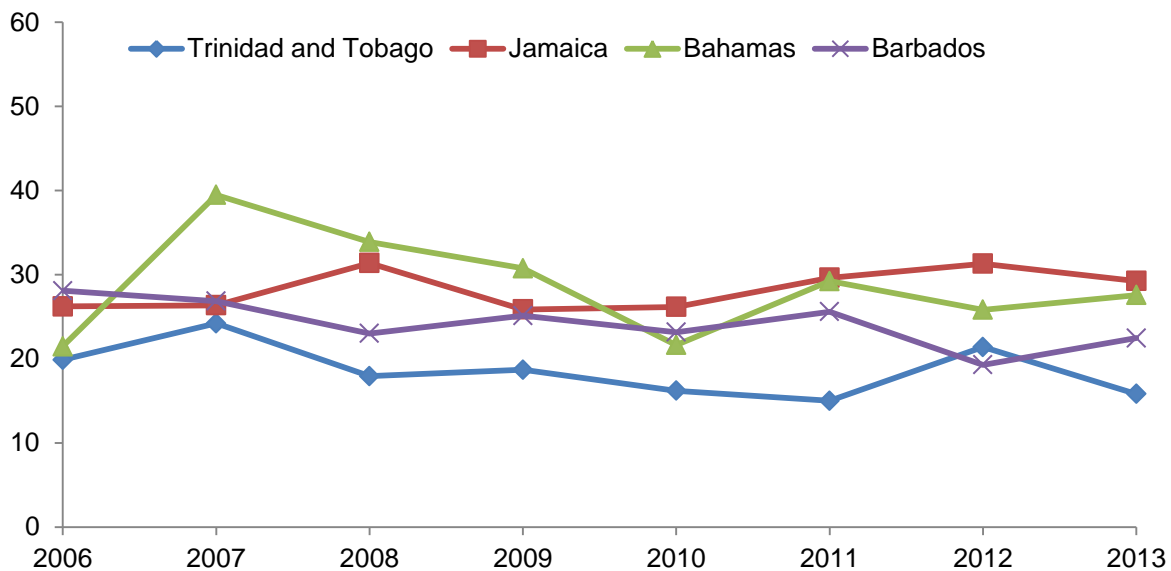
<sup>29</sup> Section 15 of the 1991 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act criminalized marital rape, but only in certain circumstances, as follows: (1) Any person who has sexual intercourse with his spouse without the consent of the spouse- (A) where there is in existence in relation to them (i) a decree nisi of divorce; (ii) a decree of judicial separation; (iii) a separation agreement; or (iv) an order of a court for the person not to molest or co-habit with his spouse, or any other order made under Part II; or (B) where the person has notice that a petition for judicial separation, divorce or nullity of marriage has been presented to a court, is guilty of the offence of sexual assault by spouse and liable to imprisonment for a term of 15 years.

<sup>30</sup> See Kelly, Lovett, and Regan (2005)

<sup>31</sup> From this data, the annual rape rates per 100,000 population were calculated using population estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013) for corresponding years. The average rate for the five-year period was then calculated.

five- year average (2009–2013) of other countries in the region such as Jamaica (28), Barbados (23), and Trinidad and Tobago (17) (Figure 24). It is important to note again that underreporting and data collection error could mean the actual number of cases is significantly higher. Studies show that self-reported rapes on victimization surveys are generally 25 per cent higher than those reported to the police (UNDP, 2012, p. 26). Although no national victimization surveys including questions on rape were identified for this study, one survey of secondary school children in The Bahamas in 2011 found that more than 1 in 11 female students (9 per cent) reported having been forced to have sexual intercourse (National-Anti Drug Secretariat and Ministry of National Security, 2012).

**Figure 24: Rape Rate per 100,000 Population in The Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados**



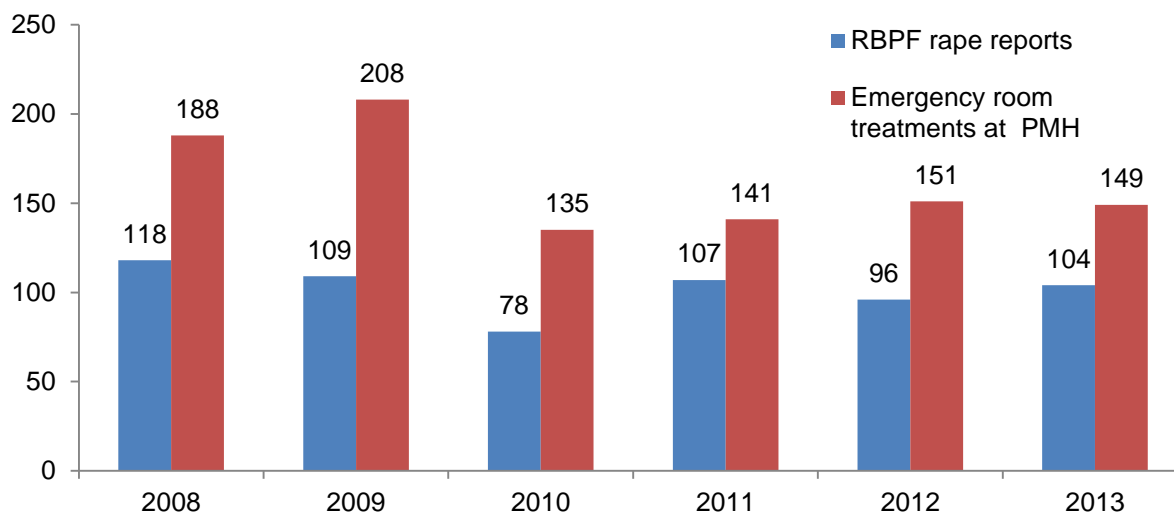
Sources: Numbers of reported rape cases were provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Strategic Policy and Planning Unit; the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service; and the Royal Barbados Police Force. The rape rate for Jamaica was taken from UNODC (2014). Rape rates were calculated using population estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

An illustration of how police numbers may be vastly under-representative of the actual amount of rapes occurring in The Bahamas is that, in 2013, The Bahamas Crisis Centre in New Providence alone counselled 122 new clients for rape and 42 for sexual assault, while the police recorded only 104 rapes for the entire country.

Emergency room data from Princess Margaret Hospital, shown in Figure 25, also help provide a more complete picture. According to the data, in 2013 the hospital's emergency room alone treated nearly 1.5 times the amount of rapes reported to the police. However, not all rape victims seek medical treatment, meaning even these numbers are under-representative. Furthermore, the figure only includes rape cases from Princess Margaret Hospital.<sup>32</sup> This is further evidence that rape is clearly a much larger problem in The Bahamas than is captured by current statistics.

<sup>32</sup> Emergency room data for RAND Hospital in Grand Bahama were not available.

**Figure 25: Comparison of Royal Bahamas Police Force Rape Reports with Emergency Room Treatment of Rape in Princess Margaret’s Hospital (PMH), 2008–2013**



Sources: Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPf) data; and emergency room data from Princess Margaret Hospital supplied by the Statistics Unit of the Public Hospital Authority.

Finally, rapes in The Bahamas have relatively low police clearance rates. On average, the percentage of rape cases solved between 2010 and 2013 was 40 per cent, while homicides for the same period had a clearance rate of 61 per cent.<sup>33</sup> This means rapes are highly unlikely to be prosecuted, which does little to stimulate better reporting.

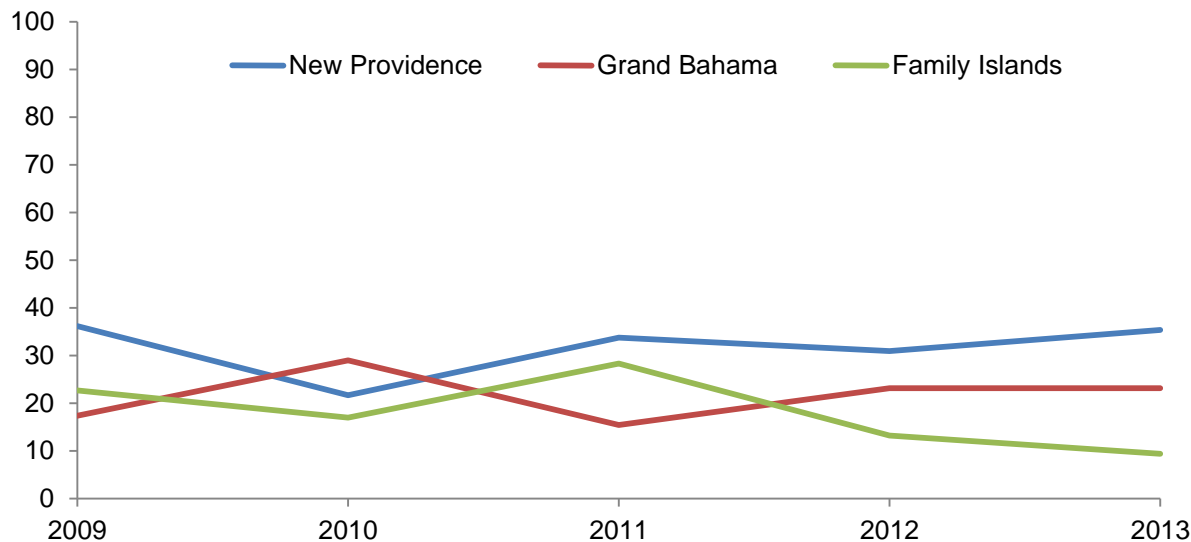
#### *Locations of Rape*

Given that 70 per cent of the Bahamian population lives in New Providence, it is not surprising that 79 per cent of reported rapes between 2009 and 2013 occurred there (Figure 26). Even when controlling for population, the rate of reported rapes in New Providence in 2013 (35 per 100,000 population) is higher than both the national rate (28 per 100,000) and the rates of Grand Bahama (23 per 100,000) and the Family Islands (9.4 per 100,000). From 2009 to 2013, rates of reported rape remained fairly steady, with a slight decline in the Family Islands.

<sup>33</sup> Calculations based on unpublished data provided by the RBPf.



**Figure 26: Rape Rate per 100,000 Population by Region, 2009–2013**



Sources: The rape rate by region was calculated using rape reports registered by the Royal Bahamas Police Force and the population by island from The Bahamas Department of Statistics 2010 census.

## Violence at Schools

Acts of violence or crimes committed at school can often be a call for help and may be an important moment for intervention. If an individual exhibits regular violent or delinquent behaviour at a young age, not only can it become habit forming, it may also lead to suspension, expulsion, or eventually dropping out of school. In turn, these youths may be put at a larger disadvantage for finding and maintaining employment, positive role models, and other protective factors that can help insulate them from becoming involved in crime. Although there is no direct causal relationship, it is telling that the majority (54.8 per cent) of inmates at Foxhill Prison reported having participated in fighting when they were growing up, and that 25.3 per cent reported being expelled from school because of fighting (Fielding, 2012).

At the time of this report, Global School Health Survey (GSHS) data collected for the first time in 2013 were still being analysed and were not made available. The GSHS, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the United Nations, is conducted in many countries across the world primarily among students from 13-17 years old. In The Bahamas, the sample covered 32 schools and 3,750 students.<sup>34</sup> The questionnaire included questions on being a victim and on perpetrating acts of violence and delinquency, among many others. When these data become available, they will be an important resource for researchers and policymakers.

The 2011 Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey contained, for the first time in the survey's history, questions related to crime, violence, and victimization (National-Anti Drug Secretariat and Ministry of National Security, 2012). The survey shows that in The Bahamas, 21.4 per cent of secondary school students self-reported having been physically attacked and 40.4 per cent had been in a physical fight<sup>35</sup> one or more times during the past 12 months. Male

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by the Pan American Health Organization upon request.

<sup>35</sup> A physical attack, as defined in the survey, is when "one or more people hit or strike someone, or when one or more people hurt another person with a weapon (such as a stick, knife, or gun)." A fight is defined as "when two students of about the same strength or power chose to fight each other."

students (26 per cent) were significantly more likely than female students (17.2 per cent) to have been attacked and in a fight (49 per cent of males had been in a fight compared to 32.2 per cent of females) (National-Anti Drug Secretariat and Ministry of National Security, 2012, p. 21). Regarding being a victim of bullying, 15.9 per cent of students reported having been bullied once or more in the past 30 days. In terms of perpetrating bullying, 15.5 per cent of students admitted to hitting, kicking, or pushing other children on a daily basis. Interestingly, females (15.5 per cent) were equally as likely as males (15.4 per cent) to exhibit such behaviour (pp. 22-23).

Overall, 18.2 per cent of students admitted to carrying a weapon such as a gun or knife on one or more occasions during a 30-day period prior to the survey, but only 10.4 per cent were carried on school property. Male students (27.4 per cent) were significantly more likely than female students (9.4 per cent) to have carried a weapon (National-Anti Drug Secretariat and Ministry of National Security, 2012, p. 23). The survey also found that nearly 1 of 4 students (24.9 per cent) had their personal property damaged or stolen while on school grounds.

Unfortunately administrative data on acts of violence and crimes committed at schools in The Bahamas are incomplete, difficult to compare between districts, and may be largely inaccurate. The only data on school violence and crime that could be provided for this study are summarized in Table 3. It is important to note that each school district collects and records information about incidents of violence or property crimes in a different manner, using different categories. At present, the Ministry of Education reports it is in the process of developing a standardized form and reporting process. Currently, schools are not required to collect or report this information. No information was provided from schools outside New Providence or from the Northeastern District. It was noted in interviews that this information is currently not collected on a regular basis at an institutional level; rather it is produced by request only. It was also mentioned that underreporting is likely very high considering there is no obligation to report. Offenses may only be recorded if there is grave physical harm done.

It is important to note that while the Southeastern District does appear to have higher numbers, it is possible that this is a result of underreporting by other schools. The Southeastern District also includes the two juvenile detention centres (Willie Mae Pratt and Simpson Penn).

**Table 3: Acts of Violence and Crimes Reported by Three School Districts in New Providence, 2012/2013 School Year**

	Northwestern	Southeastern	Southwestern	Total (NW, SE, and SW Districts)
Bullying		159	65	224
Fighting	117	674	358	1149
Assault on another student			96	96
Assault/threat on staff	2	43	5	50
Staff assault on a student				0
Stabbing			3	3
Drug possession/use	27	255	17	299
Robbery/theft/stealing	0	73	39	112
Threats of harm/violence			39	39
Weapon possession/use	33	177	30	240

Gang-related behaviour		15		15
Total incidents	179	1396	652	2227
Total number of student enrolled	6,361	9,793	8,073	24,227
Total incidents per 1,000 students	28.1	142.6	80.8	91.9

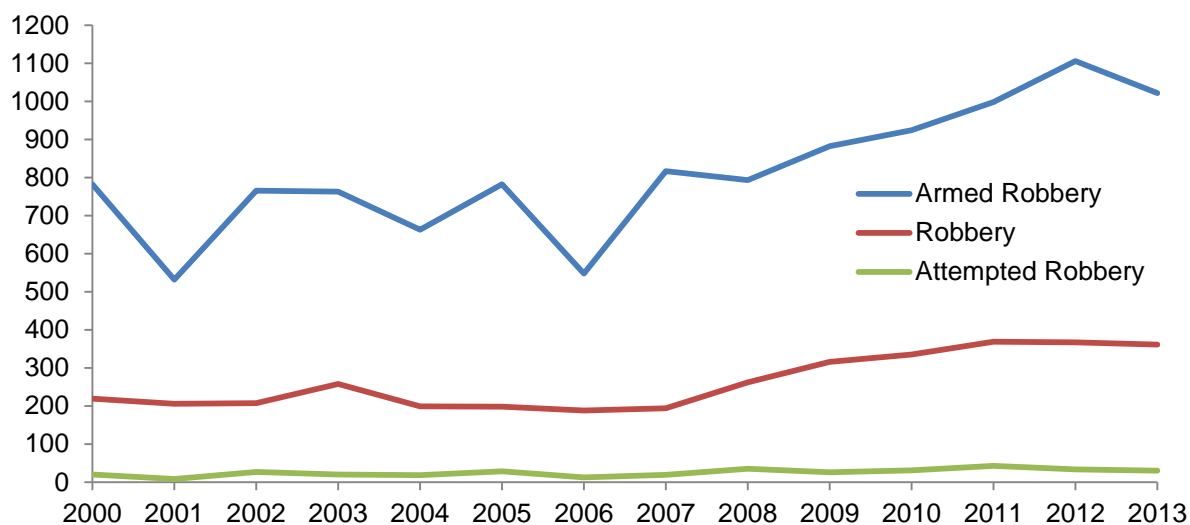
Source: Data provided directly by school districts via the Ministry of Education.

Note: No data were provided for the Northeastern district. Black spaces indicate that no data were provided.

## Robbery

Robbery is the crime of taking the property of another by means of force, threat, or fear. It is differentiated from theft, and considered a violent crime, specifically because of the use or threat of the use of force. The 2010 Citizen Security Survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that robberies, burglaries, and break-ins were the most feared crimes in the Caribbean (UNDP, 2012, p. 23). Armed robbery – robbery with the use of a weapon – can be particularly traumatizing for the victim. As indicated previously in this report, according to the RBPF, 30 per cent of homicides in 2013 took place at some stage during a robbery or attempted robbery. As shown in Figure 11 earlier, this number has also been increasing. Figure 27 shows that the number of armed robberies in The Bahamas, after dipping in 2006 to 548 cases, increased 86.5 per cent to 1,022 in 2013. Unarmed robberies increased 92 per cent from 188 in 2006 to 361 in 2013.

**Figure 27: Robbery, Armed Robbery, and Attempted Robbery, 2000–2013**



Source: Data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

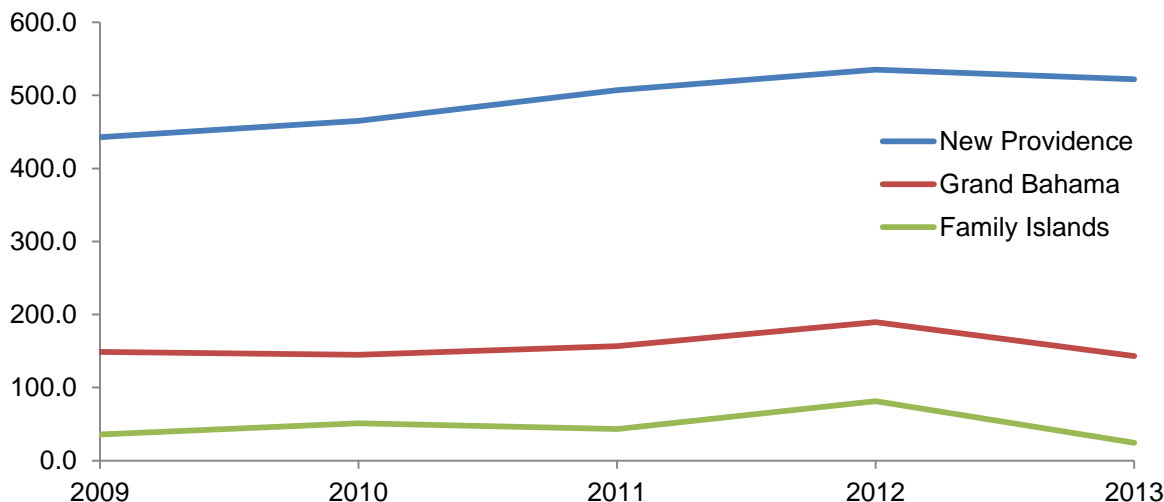
Note: Any cross-national comparisons should be conducted with caution because of the differences that exist between the legal definitions of offences in countries, or the different methods of offence counting and recording.

## Victims and Locations of Robberies

Of the 1,022 cases of robbery in 2013 for which the sex of the victim was recorded (i.e., 73 per cent of all robbery cases), 28 per cent of victims were women and 72 per cent were male. About 11 per cent of robbery victims in 2013 were foreigners and 89 per cent were Bahamian. The overwhelming majority of robberies during the five-year period took place in New

Providence. Even when controlling for population, the robbery rate per 100,000 population in New Providence in 2013 (522.2) was far higher than the national rate and the rates of the other regions of the country (Figure 28).

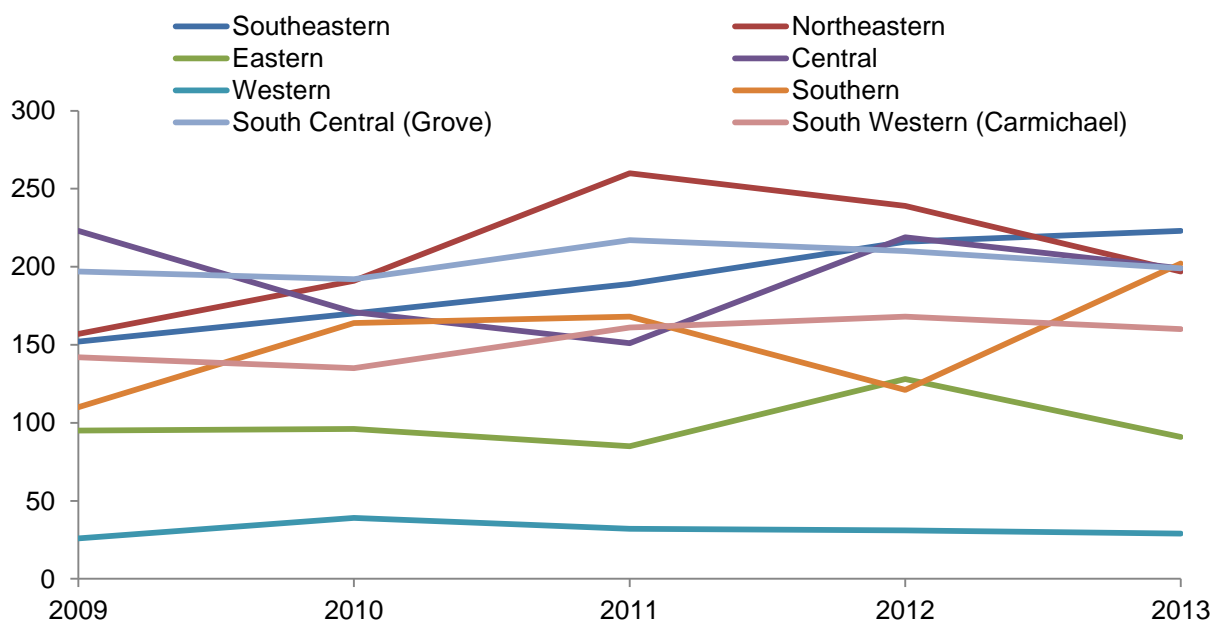
**Figure 28: Robbery Rate per 100,000 Population by Region, 2009–2013**



Source: The robbery rate by region was calculated using robbery reports recorded by the RBPF and the population by island from The Bahamas Department of Statistics 2010 Census.

Figure 29 shows that the Western Police Division of New Providence has consistently reported far fewer robberies than other areas. Those police divisions with higher reported robberies include the Northeastern, Southeastern, Central, South-Central, and Southern divisions.

**Figure 29: Total Robberies by Police Division in New Providence, 2009–2013**

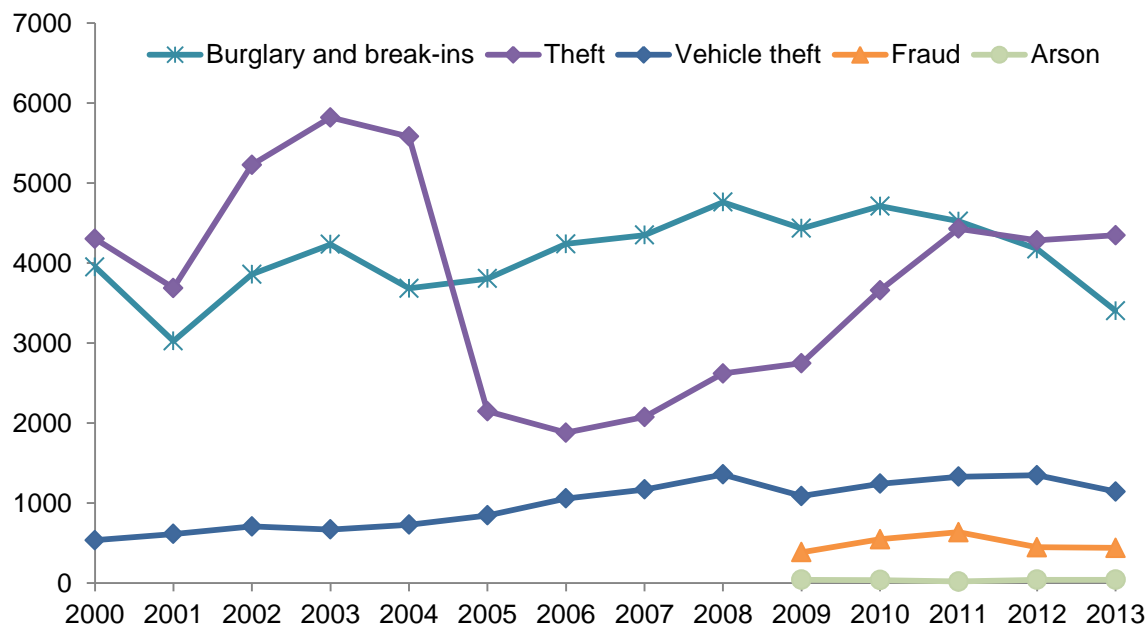


Source: Unpublished data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

## Property Crime

Property crimes in the Bahamas involve the damage, destruction, or unlawful use or removal of physical property and/or other assets owned. Sub-categories include theft, house break-ins, shop break-ins, fraud, receipt of stolen goods, and other incidents. As shown in Figure 1 earlier in this report, property crimes are more prevalent than violent crimes in The Bahamas, but have also been decreasing since 2011. Figure 30 shows there were high levels of theft until a drastic drop in 2005. Theft levels began climbing again around 2008, perhaps related to the global economic crisis that has affected tourism and jobs. Burglary and break-ins began to decrease in 2010. Vehicle thefts increased at a fairly steady rate from 2000 to 2008, the dipped slightly and increased again until 2012.

**Figure 30: Property Crimes Recorded by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2000–2013**



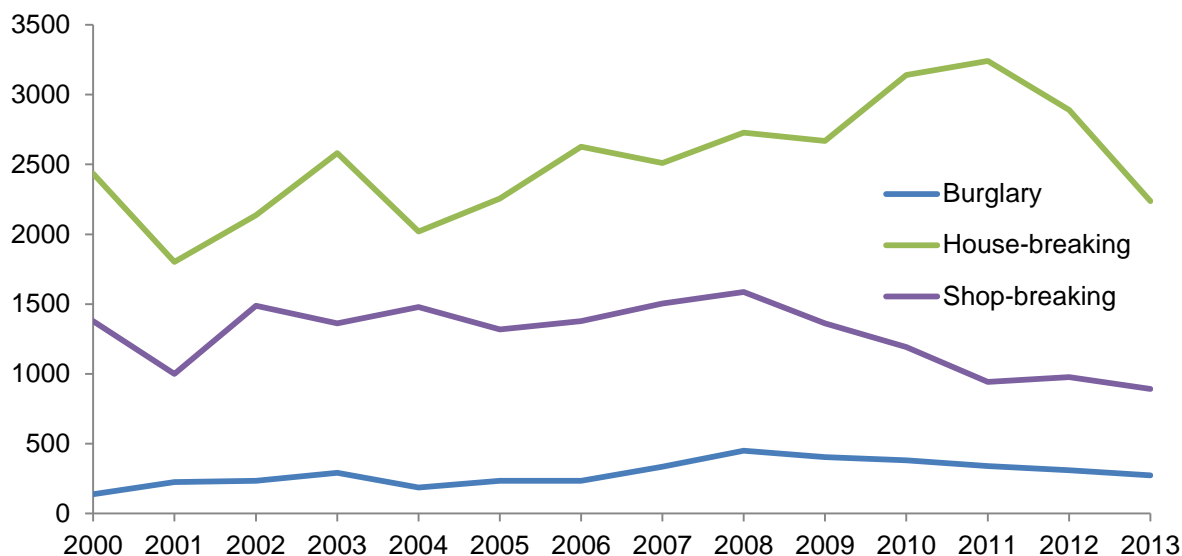
Source: Data from the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

Note: Burglary and break-ins includes the sub-categories of shop break-ins and house break-ins. Theft includes the sub-categories of stealing and stealing from vehicles.

Figure 31 shows a breakdown of sub-categories of burglary and break-ins. The highest numbers of crimes recorded in this category are house break-ins, which steeply declined after peaking in 2011, followed by shop break-ins, which decreased after 2008.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> According to The Bahamas penal code “a person commits housebreaking if he unlawfully breaks any building for the purpose of executing, or of facilitating or abetting the execution of the offence of stealing or any felony therein, by himself or by any other person, for the purpose of effecting or facilitating the escape therefrom of himself or of any other person after the commission of or attempt to commit the offence of stealing or any felony therein” (Penal Code CH84-190, 361 paragraph 1). Burglary is defined as committing “housebreaking by night in the case of a dwelling-house” (Penal Code CH84-190, 363).

**Figure 31: Burglary and Break-ins, 2000–2013**



Source: Data from the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

## Gangs

It is not surprising that understanding gang violence in The Bahamas presents several challenges. Unlike other Caribbean countries that have become infamous for gang violence (such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago), gangs are a fairly new and evolving phenomenon in The Bahamas. Moreover, even international experts on the subject remain largely divided on how to define gangs and measure violent gang activity (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2010, p. 130). The Eurogang Programme definition, developed by over 100 U.S. and European researchers, defines a gang as follows: “A street gang is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity” (Klein and Maxson, 2006, p. 2). Ways of measuring gang violence also differ greatly from one place to another. In some cases a crime is considered to be gang-related if the individuals committing the crime are gang members (used in Los Angeles), while in others the crime must be motivated by serving gang interests (Chicago) (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2010). According to the RBPF, there are currently no official data available on gang-related crimes in The Bahamas.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the information presented here is based on interviews and the limited existing literature on the subject. Having more precise data on gangs is an important priority if the interventions being proposed – which include “violence breakers,” “shock treatment,” and an anti-gang police unit – are to be successful (see Sections III and IV)..

Gangs began to develop in The Bahamas in the late 1970s as territorial groups of youths joined together for protection and a sense of group identity. The first violent youth gang in Nassau was named the “Syndicate” and grew out of the East Street area. One of the largest and most well-known gangs, the “Rebellion,” developed as a splinter group, but eventually outgrew the Syndicate in membership and territory. Initially weapons used were rocks, bats, and bottles, but eventually the groups began using firearms. The activities of these gangs evolved over time

<sup>37</sup> Official communication from the RBPF, February 20, 2014.

from breaking windows to robberies and eventually “warring” or retaliation against other gangs. During the 1980s, different rival gangs began to emerge and gangs became increasingly engaged in drug trafficking. International traffickers often paid local groups with drugs, leading to an accumulation of drugs within the country. In turn, the need increased for gangs to become more heavily armed to protect the drugs from being stolen, and drugs were increasingly sold locally to convert them into cash. The larger gangs controlled drug distribution in the city and generated income mainly from the sale of powder cocaine and crack. In the 1990s and early 2000s, gangs in The Bahamas became better structured and continued to expand their activities into suburban areas, resulting in increased territorial conflicts between rival gangs.

By most accounts, there are currently several criminal gangs operating in The Bahamas, but most are not entrenched and lack the formal structure associated with higher levels of organized crime (OAS, 2010). Estimates of the number of youths involved in gangs in the country range from 6,000 to 10,000 (OAS, 2010; Duba and Jencius, 2004). Around 18 different gangs have been identified as operating in The Bahamas, varying in size, structure, membership, and the extent of involvement with illegal activities.<sup>38</sup> Currently, the largest and most prominent gangs are said to include “One Order,” “Fire and Theft,” and “Mad Ass.”<sup>39</sup>

Gangs in schools are generally considered to be less harmful and involved in lower-level delinquent activities such as fights, property damage, and graffiti. The 2011 Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey revealed that 11.3 per cent of secondary school children reported belonging to a violent group (National-Anti Drug Secretariat, Ministry of National Security, 2012, p. 24). Former gang member Carlos Reid suggests that Bahamian gangs develop in stages, going from non-violent “youth groups” to “delinquent groups” to “organized groups” (Duba and Jencius, 2004, p. 32). Many school gangs are thought to simply be groups of youth who are bonded by similar interests, neighbourhoods, or activities and do not necessarily engage in deviant behaviour.<sup>40</sup> More sophisticated street gangs, however, may recruit from schools and are more heavily involved in criminal activity. According to documents submitted to the Organization of American States (OAS), these gangs are expanding their influence in communities both in New Providence and the Family Islands for a variety of reasons, including expanding their drug distribution territories, increasing illicit revenue, hiding from law enforcement, and escaping other gang rivals. Many suburban communities are now experiencing increased gang-related crimes and violence (OAS, 2010). The same study warns that a rising number of gangs based in New Providence are seeking connections with foreign criminal organizations to obtain more direct access to foreign sources of illicit drugs.

### **III. THE BAHAMIAN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING CRIME AND VIOLENCE**

A comprehensive approach to reducing crime and violence requires a balance of control and prevention initiatives. There is growing recognition in The Bahamas that while measured crime suppression is necessary, arrest and incarceration alone are insufficient for solving the problem. This section presents a brief overview of the collective institutional framework for addressing crime and violence. It includes agencies and organizations that work with communities, victims,

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<sup>38</sup> The Bahamas Ministry of National Security.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Interviews with Zoey Powell (Ministry of Education), Dr. Curtis (Refocus Centres), Carlos Reid (Youth Against Violence), and Eric Fox (Teen Challenge).

and perpetrators at various points along the time line before, during, and after a criminal or violent act has occurred. The second half of the section presents laws, policies, and strategies that are in place to frame and support the programmes being run by these entities.

In The Bahamas, and around the world, working together presents a tremendous challenge for these stakeholders. However, collective efforts are necessary to strengthen interventions and avoid duplicating efforts in one area while leaving gaps in others. This report found that too often stakeholders worked on their own interventions, in relative isolation from one another, without adopting collective and collaborative approaches. It is hoped that this presentation of the various agencies and organizations involved in violence and crime prevention (followed by a detailed mapping of the programmes and projects being implemented in the next section) can help identify the strengths of the various actors involved, opportunities for collaboration, and gaps in the current approaches.

## **Public Institutions**

### ***Ministry of National Security***

The primary governmental body responsible for public safety in The Bahamas is the Ministry of National Security. The ministry has policy oversight over the main agencies responsible for law enforcement, including the Royal Bahamas Police Force, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, and the Department of Correctional Services. In addition to other responsibilities, the ministry makes final decisions on Prerogatives of Mercy related to the pardoning or early release of offenders, and oversees the National Anti-Drug Secretariat to bring more cohesion to national drug control efforts. Several key initiatives related to violence prevention and suppression that the ministry implements or is involved with include Urban Renewal 2.0 (in conjunction with other ministries); Operation Ceasefire; the Swift Justice Initiative (in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General); closed-circuit television monitoring cameras; electronic monitoring of persons on bail; improved firearms marking, tracing, and destruction; Remand Courts; and drug reduction. These initiatives are explained in further detail in Section IV of this report.

In 2012/2013, the ministry had a total of 63 personnel and a total budget of \$3,658,755, which represents approximately 0.2 per cent of total government expenditure. The amount of funds allocated to the ministry was projected to increase by 25 per cent in 2013/2014 to \$4,846,937 and to \$5,107,588 for Fiscal Year 2014/2015.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Royal Bahamas Police Force***

The Royal Bahamas Police Force employs 3,339 personnel, of whom nearly 3,200 have principal functions related to the prevention, detection, and investigation of crime.<sup>42</sup> This amounts to 847.2 officers per 100,000 population.<sup>43</sup> Under the Police Act of 2009, the Police Commissioner serves under the Minister of National Security and must submit an annual Commissioner's Policing Plan, as well as a report on implementation of the plan.<sup>44</sup> The RBPF is made up of divisions and special branches throughout New Providence, Northern Bahamas,

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<sup>41</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014 and Estimates of Expenditure on Revenue Account 2014/2015.

<sup>42</sup> Numbers taken from the Ministry of Finance's Estimates of Expenditure on Revenue Account 2013/2014. The expenditure estimate for 2013/2014 included 3,339 total personnel, 3,197 of whom are officers and the rest support staff (secretaries, clerks, janitors, drivers, etc.)

<sup>43</sup> Calculated based on the 3,197 officers and a population estimate of 377,374 in 2013 using population estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (UNDESA, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> The 2009 Bahamas Police Act.



and the Family Islands. The island of New Providence is divided into 10 policing divisions, Grand Bahama is divided into four divisions, and the Family Island District covers over 14 major family islands. Officers are further divided into uniform officers, Crime and Intelligence divisions, and Special Divisions. The Crime and Intelligence Division includes departments such as the Drug Enforcement Unit, Criminal Records Office, Interpol, Serious Crimes Unit, Homicide Squad, Firearms Tracing and Investigations Unit, and many others. Special Divisions include Prosecutions, Traffic, Mobile, Harbour Patrol, Internal Security, K-9, Air Wing, and Force Garage.<sup>45</sup> Some of the initiatives covered in more detail in this report include community policing in Urban Renewal Centres, firearm marking and destruction, the National Crime Prevention Office, the use of CompStat (Computer Statistics) management, and the policing of hot spots.

Since the beginning of 2010 the average clearance has been 61 per cent for murder cases and 40 per cent for rape cases.<sup>46</sup> Both the Police Complaints and Corruption Branch of the RBPF and the Police Complaints Inspectorate Office – an independent body composed of five citizens – investigate complaints against the police. As of October 2013, there were 163 complaints against officers, about half of which involved assault (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

Although the police force falls under the supervision of the Ministry of National Security, it has a separate budget. The annual expenditure for the RBPF steadily increased starting in 2010 and reached \$132,323,679 in 2012/2013, which amounted to 7.27 per cent of total government expenditure. Estimated expenditure for 2013/2014 decreased by 0.04 per cent to \$127,136,877 and increased to \$129,249,756 for 2014/2015.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Department of Correctional Services (Her Majesty's Prison)*

The Department of Correctional Services at Fox Hill is the country's only prison and is responsible for housing all inmates convicted of crimes in The Bahamas. The Department of Correctional Services provides security at the prison, as well as inmate activities and support (food, bedding, clothing, and medical care). Prison facilities include the Remand Centre, Remand Court, maximum security blocks, medium and minimum security/work release units, and a separate women's unit. Female prisoners are held in a separate building away from male prisoners, but still within the same prison walls. All juvenile offenders are separated from adults. Male juveniles on remand are held in a custody block designated for juveniles only and sentenced male juveniles are held at the medium security unit. Female juveniles are kept separate from adults at the Female Housing Security Unit (U.S. Department of State, 2013). The Department of Correctional Services is overseen by a superintendent and had 622 prison guards and employees in 2013. Expenditure of the Prison Department in 2012/2013 was \$23,036,978, representing 1.26 per cent of total government expenditure. The estimated budget for 2013/2014 remained at nearly the same level (\$23,084,166) with a slight increase for 2014/2015 to \$23,252,666.<sup>48</sup>

The prison, which was originally designed to hold 750 inmates, reported a total population (of the prison and the Remand Centre)<sup>49</sup> of 1,506 in 2013. Of the 3,040 total annual admissions, 1,968 were on remand (held pre-trial), while only 1,072 were sentenced. The overcrowding has been attributed to the large number of petty criminals and to the backlog in processing at the Remand Centre. Due to overcrowding at the Remand Centre, some prisoners awaiting trial are

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<sup>45</sup> For more information visit the RBPF website at <http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/>.

<sup>46</sup> Calculated using data on cases solved provided by the RBPF.

<sup>47</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014 and Estimates of Expenditure on Revenue Account 2014/2015.

<sup>48</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry Of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>49</sup> The Remand Centre holds individuals who have pleaded not guilty and are not granted bail.

held in the maximum security block. In 2010, the Ministry of National Security and the Department of Correctional Services initiated an electronic ankle-bracelet surveillance system for suspects awaiting trial to help address overcrowding (see Section IV).

Three surveys of prison inmates were identified for this report.<sup>50</sup> While not necessarily representative of prison inmates, a 2010 survey conducted by researchers at the College of The Bahamas described some of the main characteristics of prison inmates.<sup>51</sup> The majority were male (95 per cent), from The Bahamas (93 per cent), and raised in New Providence (54 per cent). Most inmates grew up with only their mother (40 per cent), with only 36 per cent from two-parent households. Most inmates had at least initiated a high school education (68 per cent) and 54 per cent had dropped out of school somewhere along the way: 48 per cent of these were expelled – for fighting (33 per cent) and bad behaviour (22 per cent) (Minnis et al., 2011). Regarding employment, a surprising 59 per cent indicated that they were employed at the time of incarceration (Stevenson, 2012). This finding challenges the assumption that unemployment is the greatest contributor to crime. While 62 per cent responded that their salary was enough to live on, 40 per cent (of those who responded to the question) believed the cause of their criminality was related to economic factors (Stevenson, 2012). The same study, applying discourse analysis to inmates' answers, concluded that the responses were related to "relative deprivation," that is, feelings of inequality and material wants rather than needs.

#### *National Anti-Drug Secretariat*

The National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS) became operational in 2008 for the purpose of coordinating the anti-drug efforts of the Ministry of National Security with other agencies and NGOs. NADS is responsible for the following:

##### Coordinating national initiatives:

- Helps develop public information campaigns and policies and programmes to prevent drug abuse, treatment and rehabilitation, and reduce the supply of drugs
- Facilitates and acts as a focal point for coordination to implement the aforementioned policies, programmes, and campaigns

##### Coordinating and encouraging research:

- Collects, compiles, and analyses national statistical and other data on drug abuse and illicit trafficking, including regularly conducting surveys and studies that inform policy; regularly assesses the state of drug control and implementation of the National Anti-Drug Strategy; and prepares reports and papers, including an annual report on the drug situation in The Bahamas, and encourages further research.

##### Coordinating regional and international dialogues and obligations:

- Coordinates Bahamian delegations and representation of The Bahamas in bilateral, regional, and international forums and participation in regional/international organizations (Caribbean Community, OAS, United Nations) concerning drug abuse and illicit trafficking

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<sup>50</sup> The 1998 unpublished survey conducted by the National Crime Commission, a 2009 unpublished survey conducted by Her Majesty's Prison's Inmates Activities Unit and Research Department, and a 2010 unpublished survey conducted by researchers at the College of The Bahamas (results presented in Minnis et al., 2011).

<sup>51</sup> A purposive stratified random sample of 336 inmates was used from the maximum, medium, and minimum security prisons, the female prison, and the Remand Center.

- Assists in the implementation of international drug control treaties and agreements
- Cooperates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries/agencies to fulfil reporting obligations relative to drugs and related matters, as required under regional, hemispheric, and international treaties and arrangements
- Convenes, organizes, and manages national drug control forums, and assists in convening and organizing bilateral and international meetings held in The Bahamas, including the Tripartite Joint Task Force (The Bahamas, United States, and Turks and Caicos Islands)

To date, NADS has carried out two national surveys on drug use in secondary schools (2008, 2011). In 2012/2013, the Ministry of National Security allocated \$60,000 for NADS (an increase from \$45,000 in 2010). In 2013/2014, the projected budget remained the same and represented a meagre 0.003 per cent of the national budget.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Ministry of State and Legal Affairs and Office of the Attorney General***

The Attorney General and her team of law officers and administrative personnel in the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and Ministry of Legal Affairs (MLA) are important in crime prevention and reduction because they draft laws, prosecute those who break them, and help manage the court system where criminals are prosecuted. The efficiency and effectiveness of the judiciary administration system is extremely important for reducing crime and violence. In the case of The Bahamas, the inability of the OAG and the judiciary to expeditiously prosecute criminal cases has led to both a lack of faith in the rule of law and extreme prison overcrowding.

Many criminal cases remain among an ever-increasing backlog and a diminishing number of convictions. According to the OAG, the court calendar is currently full through 2016. The OAG has put together a special project to accelerate cases that are part of the backlog going back to 2000. There are 568 of these cases set for trial in the six criminal courts and another 491 cases that have yet to be scheduled.<sup>54</sup> From May 2012 to December 2012, only 69 criminal cases were heard. Of the small percentage of cases that went to trial, 42 per cent resulted in convictions, 29 per cent in not guilty verdicts, and 29 per cent were dismissed (due to a mistrial or lack of evidence, among other reasons). In 2013, 127 cases were tried, 48 per cent resulted in convictions, 42 per cent in not guilty verdicts, and 20 per cent were dismissed.<sup>55</sup> According to Hanna (2011), from 2005–2009 only 5.1 per cent of murder cases resulted in convictions.

Due to the significant backlog, some case delays are reported to last up to five years. With support from the IDB in 2013, the OAG re-initiated the pilot Swift Justice Initiative (started initially during the PLP government in 2005) to address some of these issues (see Annex 7). A new case management system has been put in place to guarantee that case files are complete before arraignments. Other issues associated with the backlog that are being targeted for improvement include the efficiency of the Court Reporting Unit responsible for transcripts (court reporters are often not available, meaning that the trial cannot proceed) and the overlapping of cases scheduled with the same lawyer (which inhibits one of the cases from proceeding). An additional problem that may be more difficult to address is the lack of plea bargaining. Authorities commented that plea bargaining is rare because defendants believe that either they can drag out a case for years before being tried, or count on the weaknesses of the police and prosecution to produce sufficient evidence. This means that nearly all cases must go to trial, creating an even longer backlog.

<sup>52</sup> Calculations based on Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>54</sup> Data provided by the OAG, June 3, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Unpublished data provided by the OAG.

There are currently no public defenders in The Bahamas. Defendants can hire an attorney, but the government only provides representation for capital crime suspects who have no ability to pay. A Crown Brief is issued to a lawyer to represent an individual charged with a serious offence, such as a sexual matter, armed robbery, or murder, and cannot afford an attorney. The court will appoint one and government will pay the attorney a stipend of \$300 a day.

The OAG is composed of two departments. The Department of Legal Affairs advises government ministries and agencies, drafts and vets legal documents, acts on behalf of government ministries and agencies in civil litigation, and drafts and amends bills and subsidiary legislation. The Department of Public Prosecutions works under the Attorney General to prosecute criminal cases. The Ministry of Legal Affairs and OAG currently has 300 employees and an annual budget of \$12,187,638 (0.67 per cent of total government expenditure) for 2012/2013. Expenditure is projected to decrease slightly to \$11,988,795 in 2013/2014 and estimates for 2014/2015 were \$13,249,087.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Ministry of Social Services and Community Development***

The Ministry of Social Services and Community Development deals with several important aspects of violence and crime, including domestic violence, child abuse, preventative programmes, management of juvenile detention centres, and rehabilitative services. The ministry is broken down into three departments pertinent to violence reduction and prevention: the Department of Social Services, the Department of Rehabilitation (Willie Mae Pratt and Simpson Penn Juvenile Detention Centres), and the Bureau of Women's Affairs. Several initiatives related to crime and violence prevention implemented by the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development are presented in Section IV of this report, including the Task-Force on Gender-based Violence, National Child Abuse Hotline, Child Protection Unit, Parenting Programme, and Aftercare Services for juveniles released from detention centres. The ministry also provides social workers at the nine Urban Renewal Centres.<sup>57</sup>

The current minister is supported by 103 employees. The annual budget for 2012/2013 was \$3,153,482 (0.17 per cent of total government expenditure). The projected budget for 2013/2014 was slightly lower at \$3,137,417 and increased slightly to \$3,486,487 for 2014/2015.

#### ***Department of Social Services***

The Department of Social Services provides services related to primary and secondary violence prevention. Relevant services and programmes include:

- Child Protection, Abuse Hotline, Child Care Facilities, Child Placement: Provides services to children under the age of 18 who have been subjected to any form of abuse or who have been abandoned.
- Community Support Division: Provides various types of assistance for persons in need through its various Outreach Centres.
- School Welfare: Provides a number of services for school-age children, including the national lunch programme, preschool programme, and Providing Access to Continuing Education (PACE) for pregnant teens.

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<sup>56</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry Of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>57</sup> More details on the centres can be found in Section IV of this report.

- Family Services: Provides services to individuals and families in distress and support services to the courts on family matters.

The Department of Social Services employs 537 individuals and has a separate budget from the Ministry of Social Services. The annual budget was \$44,380,789 in 2012/13, and approved estimates were \$39,868,059 in 2013/14 and \$40,201,979 for 2014/2015.<sup>58</sup>

### *Bureau of Women's Affairs*

At the time of this report the Bureau of Women's Affairs was projected to soon be elevated to the Department of Women's Affairs, and it received an increase from its 2012/2013 budget to support this transition. At \$100,000, the budget is significantly lower than those of other departments and represents only 1 per cent of the budget for the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development and 0.003 per cent of total government expenditure.<sup>59</sup> The bureau is responsible for a number of activities, among them the National Task Force on Gender-based Violence, whose final report includes a National Five-Year Strategic Plan for Reducing Domestic Violence. A second initiative is a joint project with UN Women called Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for ending Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean. Through this project the bureau is currently reviewing policing and prosecution of domestic violence cases, developing new protocols for these procedures, developing training for the police based on the gaps, and planning interventions to promote male champions of change.

### *Department of Rehabilitation (Willie Mae Pratt and Simpson Penn Juvenile Detention Centres)*

The Department of Rehabilitation is responsible for probation and offender re-entry services. This department also has oversight of the two juvenile detention centres: the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls and the Simpson Penn Centre for boys.

Services provided include supervising and counselling probationers, preparing probation reports for the courts, supervising and counselling juveniles with behavioural problems, conducting group counselling sessions, and providing after-care services for juveniles released from the detention centres. The authorities interviewed noted that after-care services are only available for juveniles leaving the detention centres, not for adult offenders. No re-entry/rehabilitation services are currently available for adult offenders after their time has been served.

The Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls and the Simpson Penn Centre for boys are residential facilities where juveniles are held for committing a criminal offense or for being deemed "beyond parental control." The majority of the girls are in the latter category. Prior to the 2007 Child Protection Act, parents could go directly to the courts to request that their child be detained for being beyond parental control. Now parents must go through the Department of Social Services, where a probation officer evaluates the need for the youth to be placed in a facility versus alternative solutions. According to the 2007 Child Protection Act, juveniles (under 18) are also prohibited from being held with adult offenders. Some juveniles are held in a separate facility in Foxhill Prison if they have committed particularly heinous crimes such as murder or armed robbery and are deemed "depraved" or of "unruly character." Currently there are 58 resident boys at Simpson Penn and 25-26 resident girls at Willie Mae Pratt. Additionally, there were 102 youths from 12-18 years-olds on probation in 2013.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Information provided in interviews with Deidre Hepburn, superintendent of the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls (02/18/14) and Darrol Hall, superintendent of the Simpson Penn Centre for boys (02/18/14).

The Department of Rehabilitation's budget for 2012/2013 was \$150,000, with an additional \$1,274,388 (0.07 per cent total government expenditure) for the Simpson Penn Centre and \$992,835 (0.05 per cent total government expenditure) for the Willie Mae Pratt Centre. Both centres had slight decreases in the projected 2013/2014 budget.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Ministry of Education, Science and Technology***

As the body responsible for educating youth, the Ministry of Education has an important role to play in the prevention of crime and violence. There are 161 government schools in The Bahamas: 50 in New Providence and 111 in the Family Islands.<sup>62</sup> The Ministry of Education has taken several important steps both to prevent early behaviour problems from leading to later violence or criminal behaviour, and to reduce both student and teacher violence on school premises.

As of September 2013 the Super Me! Programme, which includes anti-bullying activities, officially became part of the curriculum in all New Providence primary schools. The Success Ultimately Reassures Everyone (SURE) alternative school for suspended boys, the Traditional Alternative Programme for Students (TAPS) alternative school for suspended girls, and the Refocus in-school suspension programme all include educational content, counselling, anger management, and conflict resolution tools. In the 2013/2014 school year, there were 12 students in TAPS, 46 students in SURE, and nearly 700 in in-school suspension through Refocus and other programmes.

Finally, in 2009, the Ministry of Education developed the Safe Schools Protocol to create a "more unified and systematic approach to disciplinary issues in the education system."<sup>63</sup> The protocol details four levels of unacceptable behaviours and appropriate disciplinary actions. It further recommends procedures for detention of students, in-school suspension, steps to take in case of child abuse, student searches, and arrests. The protocol also includes, however, a questionable permission to use corporal punishment in severe cases. Despite this inclusion, preliminary analysis appears to show that the protocol has reduced use of corporal punishment by teachers. Further details about these initiatives follow in Section IV.

In 2012/2013, the Ministry of Education and Department of Education had recurrent annual budgets of \$49,096,917 (2.7 per cent of total government expenditure) and \$201,770,380 (11 per cent of government expenditure), respectively.<sup>64</sup> In 2013/2014 the Department of Education had an approved estimated recurrent budget of \$199,642,430, which was down to \$174,934,708 in 2014/2015.

### ***Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture***

Considering that youth are the primary victims of violence and perpetrators of crimes in The Bahamas, targeted youth programmes are of particular importance. The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture is thus an integral partner in violence prevention. The ministry is divided into three divisions: Youth, Sports, and Culture. Through a number of programmes and projects, the ministry works to build protective factors to help youth stay out of gangs and away from committing crimes (including improving self-esteem, a sense of belonging, skills, and

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<sup>61</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>62</sup> According to the Ministry of Education, there were 99 private schools in the country as of 2009.

<sup>63</sup> Department of Education, 2009 Safe Schools Protocol.

<sup>64</sup> Calculations based on Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

employment opportunities). It promotes and collaborates with 300 youth organizations and liaises with many NGOs working on youth. The ministry issues a number of youth grants to community organizations that run programmes that are important for promoting and supporting youth in adopting healthy lifestyle choices.

Although some of the vocational and youth employment programmes such as Fresh Start, Self-Start, and the Private Sector Summer Employment Partnership include high-risk youth beneficiaries, none of these are specifically targeted to youth who are in conflict with the law or victims or perpetrators of crimes or violence. Fresh Start, however, is focused on high-risk and “unattached” youth (who are not in school and not involved in any other social programmes). Programme participants have often committed minor delinquent offenses and in some cases have done time in prison or juvenile detention centres prior to the programme.

The minister is supported by a staff of 218 and had a budget of \$15,740,161 (0.91 per cent of total government expenditure) in 2012/2013. The budget in 2013/2014 was projected to be lower by 0.18 per cent and further estimated to be reduced to \$13,623,475 for 2014/2015.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Ministry of Health***

Physicians and nurses are often on the front line attending those who are injured and traumatized by violence. As has already been shown in this report, the Ministry of Health is an important source of information on violent acts such as homicide, assault, rape, and child abuse. Additionally, as promoters of improved national health, Departments of Public Health are often at the forefront of public campaigns and violence prevention initiatives. Two of the initiatives of interest that are covered in more detail later in this report are the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Unit and Sexual Abuse Follow-up and Evaluation (SAFE) Unit, which are designed to support children and juveniles who are victims of abuse and sexual assault.

In The Bahamas, the Ministry of Health is divided into two agencies: the Department of Public Health and the Public Hospitals Authority.

#### *Department of Public Health*

The Department of Health provides preventive and curative healthcare. It oversees the provision and management of primary healthcare services and the development and implementation of public health programmes. The department manages community health clinics throughout The Bahamas. A tiered system of polyclinics and satellite clinics is linked to more sophisticated tertiary care services at the Princess Margaret Hospital on New Providence Island and the RAND Memorial Hospital on Grand Bahama.

#### *Public Hospitals Authority*

The Public Hospitals Authority is a quasi-government entity, governed by a Board of Directors, which is responsible for the management and development of public hospitals, namely Princess Margaret Hospital, Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre, and RAND Memorial Hospital, in addition to all the primary care clinics in Grand Bahama and all public emergency services throughout the islands. The Public Hospitals Authority collects and codes data on morbidity and mortality of individuals admitted to the hospital for assault.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

In 2012/2013 the Ministry of Health had an annual recurrent budget of \$10,742,609 and the Department of Public Health had an annual recurrent budget of \$31,620,244. The Public Hospitals Authority had an annual budget of \$215,458,562 in expenditures for 2012-2013 (including nearly 11 million in revenues).<sup>66</sup>

### **College of The Bahamas**

Universities cannot be overlooked as important partners in preventing crime and violence. Not only do universities bring together specialists and knowledge in relevant fields of sociology and criminology, they also are great potential allies for applying research methodologies to analyse trends and evaluate interventions. Many successful crime intervention models – such as Operation Ceasefire in Boston and Cure Violence in Chicago – have relied on universities to apply quantitative and qualitative research techniques to assess the nature of and dynamics driving violence and to evaluate the impact of these programmes.

The College of The Bahamas currently remains an untapped resource for such collaboration, even though it has undertaken important initiatives that address crime and violence issues. In November 2011, the college held a Violence Research Symposium that brought together faculty from across a broad spectrum of disciplines to present research on factors and trends affecting violence in The Bahamas. Research was presented regarding such topics as offender perspectives of restorative justice, guns, prison inmates at Foxhill Prison, violence on the street, media coverage of violence, and the effects of violence on children.<sup>67</sup> A successive Colloquium on Criminality was organized in 2012 to present additional research on topics related to the re-entry of ex-offenders, economics and crime, the background of sentenced prisoners at The Department of Correctional Services, and the influence of violence in the home on criminals.<sup>68</sup>

The College of The Bahamas was founded in 1974 and has transitioned from a two-year school to offering associate, bachelor's, and master's degree programmes. There are currently 4,757 students enrolled and 357 staff (203 teaching faculty). The college's operating budget is \$44,118,702,<sup>69</sup> of which \$24,994,543 was paid for by public funds in 2012/2013.<sup>70</sup>

### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

This study identified 13 NGOs that work specifically with some type of crime and violence prevention.<sup>71</sup> As The Bahamas is a strongly religious country,<sup>72</sup> the large majority of organizations identified (over 90 per cent) can be described as either faith-based organizations or as incorporating religious principles. NGOs provide services and programmes in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.<sup>73</sup> The only area where organized civil society has few activities is crime suppression, which is generally reserved for law enforcement and the criminal justice system. However, NGOs are occasionally involved in working with law enforcement. The

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Abstracts of research presented at the 2011 Violence Symposium at the College of The Bahamas are available at <http://www.cob.edu.bs/Research/ViolenceSymposium/Abstracts.php>.

<sup>68</sup> Abstracts of research presented at the 2012 Colloquium on Criminality at the College of The Bahamas can be found at [http://www.cob.edu.bs/conferences/criminalitycolloquium\\_presentations.php](http://www.cob.edu.bs/conferences/criminalitycolloquium_presentations.php).

<sup>69</sup> For more information see <http://www.cob.edu.bs/DOCS/FactSheet.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> The Bahamas Ministry of Finance, Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>71</sup> See Annex 1 for the methodology used to identify and select NGOs for this report.

<sup>72</sup> According to the national census, 90 per cent of the country's population professes a religion. Protestant Christian denominations make up a majority and include Baptists (35 percent), Anglicans/Episcopalians (15 percent), Pentecostals (8 percent), Church of God (5 percent), Seventh-day Adventists (5 percent), and Methodists (4 percent). Roman Catholics make up 14 percent of the population.

<sup>73</sup> See Section IV of this report for definitions of these categories.



Bahamas Crisis Centre, for example, has been involved in the training of police officers on handling cases of domestic violence. Several NGOs have also provided services at Urban Renewal Centres run by community police officers.

As is the case with many non-profits world-wide, funding and sustainability are extreme challenges for Bahamian NGOs working on crime- and violence-related issues. The NGOs identified depend on a mixture of limited funding provided by foundations and government grants, donations from churches, local businesses, and individuals (often in-kind donations of food, clothing, or volunteer services), and occasionally small payments from beneficiaries. Only two of the 13 organizations (15 per cent) reported receiving funding from foundations in 2013. Over half the organizations (seven) received government grants of between \$15,000 and \$30,000, which amounts to between and 20 per cent of their total annual budgets. Many organization founders/administrators reported spending personal funds to maintain their services. Many NGOs expressed the view that international funding was limited because of The Bahamas' high GDP relative to other developing countries, and because government funding was limited.

Implementing sustainable programmes was also a challenge. Despite the fact that some organizations have been in existence for many years – The Bahamas Crisis Centre and the Bahamian Association for Social Health have operated for over 20 years – few NGO programmes had been implemented continuously for a period of more than two years without interruption. The significant and constant changes to programmes implemented by NGOs from one year to the next make them particularly difficult to evaluate in terms of results.

Despite the fact that several organizations receive some funding from the government and collaborated with governmental service providers on the ground (i.e., in Urban Renewal Centres or working in collaboration with the public schools), some NGOs complained of strained relations with the government.

## **Laws, Policies, and Strategies for Reducing Crime and Violence**

### ***Laws***

A number of laws have been passed in the last five to 10 years that may have significant consequences in shaping responses to crime and violence in The Bahamas. This report does not contain an exhaustive explanation of all the laws and changes to the Penal Code; rather, it aims to show those that have been most important in shaping the definitions of specific crimes detailed above and the adequate response to them. In particular, in 2011 and 2013 two different administrations put forward legislative anti-crime packages that, among other measures, proposed increasing sentences for particularly grievous crimes. Given the challenges within the criminal justice system discussed in this report – including unsolved crimes, the significant obstacles to efficiently processing criminal trials, and the overcrowding of the prison system – it is worth asking if longer and more severe sentences is truly the solution to the perceived problem of criminal impunity.

On the other hand, several foundational laws have also been approved that help to better define certain types of violence as crimes, provide tools and protection for victims, and protect children and juveniles within the justice system (e.g., the 2007 Domestic Violence Act, the 2007 Child Protection Act, and the 2008 amendment to the 1991 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act). Other laws have helped to create more transparency and effectiveness of public

authorities responsible for crime and violence prevention and control (the 2009 Police Act and, possibly, the 2012 Freedom of Information Act).

### *Marco's Law 2013*

This law is an attempt to strengthen child protection. It was passed in response to the killing of 11-year-old Marco Archer by convicted pedophile Kofhe Goodman in 2011. However, despite passing the law in 2013, legislators as of 2014 had yet to formulate regulations to implement key aspects of it. The law is expected to provide for the implementation of the Marco alert system for missing children (similar to the Amber Alert in the United States) and a sexual offenders registry (See Annex 8 for an update on Amendments after May 2014).

### *2013 Anti-Crime Legislation (approved in 2014)*

After taking back the presidency in May 2012, the PLP party followed the previous administration (see anti-crime legislation 2011 below) and introduced its own package of anti-crime bills. At the time of writing this report, the proposed legislation had yet to be approved and enacted (See Annex 8 for an update on Amendments in/after May 2014). The bills proposed amendments to the Firearms Act, Prevention of Bribery Act, Justice Protection Act, Evidence Act, Anti-Terrorism Act, and Penal Code.

### *2011 Anti-Crime Legislation*

After a dramatic rise in violent crimes in 2011, the FNM government amended several existing laws and introduced new anti-crime legislation related to the functioning of the criminal justice system. In general, the amendments increased sentences, reinforce the death penalty as an option, reduce opportunities for bail, and increase powers for judges, prosecutors, and police regarding particularly grievous crimes. Legislative changes included amendments to the Penal Code Act, Criminal Procedure Code Act, Evidence Act, Bail Act, Firearms Act, Dangerous Drugs Act, Criminal Evidence (Witness Anonymity) Act, Court of Appeal Act, and Sexual Offences Act.<sup>74</sup> The legislation became law in November 2011 and introduced some of the changes described below.

#### *Penal Code Amendments*

- Increases sentencing power for magistrates (from five to seven years of prison)
- Gives magistrates the power to grant an extension of the time a person may be held by the police while being investigated (from 48 to 72 hours)
- Ensures that the death penalty remains an option in those cases that are considered sufficient to warrant it<sup>75</sup>
- Makes murder in the most egregious category punishable by death or life imprisonment, while other murder is punishable with a sentence from 30-60 years, and increases armed robbery sentences to 15-25 years
- Makes minors convicted of murder subject to a minimum sentence of 20 years imprisonment; thereafter their continued confinement will be reviewed by the court every five years.

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<sup>74</sup> Communication with the OAG, May 1, 2014; and The Bahamas Attorney General's 2011 Report.

<sup>75</sup> Although the death penalty has been discouraged by the Privy Council of the United Kingdom (still the highest court in The Bahamas) and has not been used since 2000, it remains a legal punishment in The Bahamas.

#### *Bail Act Amendments*

- When considering granting bail in cases of heinous crimes (murder, armed robbery, rape, child molestation, possession of dangerous firearms), judges are required to consider the need to protect public safety, the safety of the victim, and the seriousness of the offense.

#### *Court of Appeals Amendments*

- The prosecution has a right to appeal a judge's ruling to uphold a "no case submission" to the Court of Appeal, or to withdraw the case from the jury in criminal trials.

#### *Evidence Act Amendments*

- Allows for the use of live television links to receive evidence of persons who are unable to be physically present at court proceedings, and provides for remand hearings to take place by live television link
- Provides for the admissibility of video recordings of testimony from child witnesses under certain circumstances
- Allows a person's previous conviction to be given in evidence in murder cases punishable by a sentence of death.

#### *Sexual Offences Act Amendments*

- Introduces a sentence range of 15 years to life for anyone convicted of rape.

#### *Firearms Act Amendments*

- Gives magistrates power to impose increased sentences of five to seven years in prison for illegal firearm possession (including in a vehicle, aircraft, or vessel)
- Creates a period of 30 days following the introduction of amendments for all citizens to turn in all unlicensed firearms to police.

#### *Dangerous Drugs Act Amendments*

- Gives magistrates the power to increase prison sentences to ranges of four to seven years for possessing with intent to supply and engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise; and five to seven years for possessing and supplying drugs to a minor and/or within one mile of a school.

#### *The 2012 Freedom of Information Act*

It is difficult to determine with certainty the possible consequences of the 2012 Freedom of Information Act for transparency and access to data on crime and violence in The Bahamas. The act was proposed in 2011 and passed in February 2012. However, at the time of this report the act had not been enacted and no evidence was found that the government had issued implementing regulations or conducted any public information/education campaigns. In theory, the act provides access to government information upon request from citizens and permanent residents. Depending on its implementation, this law could potentially improve access to crime data for researchers, journalists, and the general public. The act stipulates a fine of \$10,000 for anyone who violates the legislation. However the law also includes a series of exceptions that, depending on their interpretation, could be used to negate public access to data from law enforcement and the judicial system.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Records relating to law enforcement are exempt from disclosure if their disclosure would, or could reasonably be expected to, (1) endanger any person's life or safety; (2) affect the conduct of an investigation or prosecution of a breach or possible breach of the law, or the trial of any person or the adjudication of a particular case; (3) disclose, or enable a person to ascertain, the existence or identity of a confidential source of information in relation to law enforcement; (4) reveal lawful methods or procedures for preventing,

### *The 2009 Police Act*

Among other important aspects, this act places new restrictions and requirements on the police commissioner and provides a basis for upgrading the police force and addressing police brutality. The act determines that the police commissioner is:

- 1) Subject to the authority of the Minister of National Security
- 2) Required to prepare an annual policing plan
- 3) Required to prepare a report on performance targets and implementation of the previous year's plan

Sections 7(2) and 7(3) of the Police Force Act have been controversial because they limit the tenure of the police commissioner to five years, with the possibility to be extended for up to five additional years. Opponents have attempted to overturn this aspect of the law, asserting that such limitations can damage the impartiality of the commissioner and contravene the constitution, which only allows for the removal of the commissioner on the advice of a specially appointed tribunal. The argument in favour of this provision of the Police Act is that leadership positions such as commissioner should change periodically to ensure that new ideas and innovation are introduced into the police force on a continuous basis.<sup>77</sup>

The act clearly states in Section 59(d) that officers using unnecessary violence or mistreating prisoners can receive up to three years in prison. Section 125 further states that the minister "may make regulations for the carrying out of the objects of this Act and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations:

- 1) to get the views of the public – s.1(a)
- 2) to examine places where police detain people – s.1(b)
- 3) relating to the handling of police detainees (treatment/questioning) – s.1(d)
- 4) relating to qualifications of persons seeking enlistment – s.1(h)
- 5) relating to the taking of fingerprints of people in lawful custody – s.1(l)
- 6) relating to storing arms deposited by the public/ammunition/abandoned firearms – s.1(p)"

### *The 1991 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, Amended in 2008*

Chapter 99 of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act governs sexual offences in The Bahamas. Offences recognized under this act include rape, sexual assault by a spouse, unnatural crime, indecent assault, serious indecency, sex trafficking/procurement, sexual offences in relation to children, and sexual offences in relation to persons with mental impairment. Rape is a criminal offence and the law is gender-neutral. Rape is defined as an incident in which a person who is 14 years of age or older has sexual intercourse with a person who he or she is not married to, without that person's consent. It is also rape if the person agrees to have sexual intercourse because of threats of bodily harm, fear of bodily harm, etc. When a married person has non-consensual sex, that person may be prosecuted for sexual assault under some limited circumstances (i.e., where a decree or notice of petition for judicial separation, divorce, or nullity of marriage has been presented to the court). This particular

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detecting, investigating, or dealing with matters arising out of breaches or evasions of the law, where such revelation would, or could be reasonably likely to, prejudice the effectiveness of those methods or procedures; (5) facilitate the escape of a person from lawful detention; or (6) jeopardize the security of a prison.

<sup>77</sup> Celeste Nixon, "Repeal Police Force Act," *Tribune242*, August 2, 2012. <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2012/aug/02/repeal-police-force-act/>.

limitation of the law has been criticized by some organizations working with victims of rape and domestic violence.

An amendment to the law in 2008 increased the penalty for serious sexual offences (child pornography, rape, incest, and unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor or someone with a mental disorder), which now carry a penalty of life in prison. Additionally, the bill introduces the crimes of voyeurism and “electronic persecution.”

### *The 2007 Child Protection Act*

After two years of review and delay, the Child Protection Act of 2007 came into force in October 2009. The act, which is the result of 12 years of work by governmental and non-governmental agencies, brings domestic legislation in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It covers various aspects of rights of the child, guardianship, custody, care and protection, child abuse, children’s homes, children detained before court, juvenile courts, and detention centres.

Most relevant provisions related to violence and crime prevention are those specifically on child abuse, supervision orders for children deemed “beyond parental control,” and amendments to the Penal Code regarding children and juveniles.

### *Child Abuse*

- The act stipulates increased penalties for abuse of children.
- Reporting of all forms of abuse against children is mandatory for any person who has information that leads them to suspect a child may be being abused (Section 63).

### *Suspension and Care Orders*

- Supervision orders will be issued for children rendered uncontrollable in the first instance, rather than committal to a detention centre. If a parent or guardian determines that they are unable to control the child, they must report to the Department of Social Services/Rehabilitative and Welfare Services (not directly to the police or the courts as was done previously) to request supervision or care orders. A probation officer now interviews the child and parents to make a recommendation to the juvenile or family courts. If no other course of action is deemed possible, the officer’s recommendation may lead to:
  - a. A supervision order putting the child under supervision of the Department of Social Services/Rehabilitative and Welfare Services while the child remains in the parents’ custody (for one year, which can be extended); or
  - b. A care order placing the child in custody of the Department of Social Services/Rehabilitative and Welfare Services, where the child may be placed in foster care, a children’s home, juvenile correction centre, treatment centre, or in the care of a fit guardian (for a maximum of three years or until the child turns 18).

### *Provisions for Children and Juveniles in Conflict with the Law*

- The Child Protection Act defines anyone under the age of 18 years old as a “child.” It is mandatory that children convicted of a crime be held separately from adults, and the act changes the age of criminal responsibility from seven to 10 years old.
- The legislation raises the upper age for the juvenile detention centres from 16 to 18 years old.

- Six weeks of parenting classes are mandatory for the parent and child in cases where children are brought before the courts.
- The act mandates that a Minor's Advocate must be provided to represent unrepresented children who are parties in court proceedings such as those before the Juvenile Court.

### *The 2007 Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act*

The Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act was passed in 2007, came into force in December 2008, and was only fully implemented in 2010. The act provides a broader definition of domestic violence than previous domestic violence legislation from 1991, covering physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, and financial abuse. Unlike the previous legislation, it also applies to persons involved in relationships other than marriage and allows for protection orders to be issued by the court to protect a victim from the perpetrator.

Prior to the new law, victims of domestic violence had little legal recourse to restrain their perpetrators from coming after them prior to the occurrence of abuse, or if they did not wish to press charges for abuse. Victims were required to bring perpetrators before the courts on charges of assault, threats of harm, or other domestic-related offences, or to seek a "binding over for keeping the peace." A "binding over" can be issued by the court requiring the accused to refrain from certain behaviour for a stipulated period of time or be subject to a fine. These orders are not enforceable by the police and require the victim to bring any violation before the court for any sanction to be imposed. The protection order introduced with the new legislation is far more severe and can prohibit the offender from contacting or entering a certain geographical radius near the other individual. More importantly, violations are a criminal offense and law enforcement is instructed to take the offender into custody upon violation. According to The Bahamas Crisis Centre, protection order applications, if approved, can take from one to three weeks to be issued and generally require the perpetrator to be brought before the court.<sup>78</sup> However, interim or "emergency" protection orders can be issued the same day if the court is persuaded they are necessary.

According to The Bahamas Crisis Centre, the application process for a protection order is complicated and requires the seeker to meet a high burden of proof. The person who the order is meant to protect against must have already committed one or more acts of domestic violence (suspicion or belief that something might occur are not sufficient). A lawyer is not required by law, but the complicated nature of the process can make it difficult without one.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, other matters that the victim of abuse may need to pursue – such as separation orders, divorce, child custody, and financial support – can take far longer to be resolved (three to four months). This decreases the likelihood of victims being able to leave their abusers. The Family Court's high volume and long backlog of cases, in addition to limited hours (weekdays before 4 p.m.), along with restrictions against children in the courthouse, also create major obstacles for those seeking to escape an abusive relationship.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> For more information go to the following link on The Bahamas Crisis Centre website:

<http://crisiscentrebahamas.wordpress.com/?s=2010+DVPOA>.

<sup>79</sup> "The Law and Domestic Violence," *Guardian*, March 2, 2014,

[http://www.thenassauguardian.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=45604:the-law-and-domestic-violence-&catid=35:health-a-wellness](http://www.thenassauguardian.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45604:the-law-and-domestic-violence-&catid=35:health-a-wellness).

<sup>80</sup> Interview with director and staff at The Bahamas Crisis Centre (02/19/14).

## ***National Plans, Policies, and Strategies***

### *Project Safe Bahamas*

The current major crime and violence initiatives under the PLP government are outlined within the framework of Project Safe Bahamas, which involves four major components: Operation Ceasefire, Urban Renewal 2.0, Swift Justice Initiative, and Safe Bahamas. Each of these programmes is addressed in more detail in Section IV of this report.

*Urban Renewal 2.0* is the flagship public safety initiative designed by the current Prime Minister Perry Gladstone Christie. The initiative is intended to be a multifaceted, inter-agency approach to crime prevention and urban deterioration. It began as a pilot project in 2002 in the area of Farm Road and quickly developed to incorporate several new Urban Renewal Centres in high-crime areas in New Providence, Grand Bahama, and Abaco. From 2002 to 2007, the centres provided integrated services through community police officers, social workers, healthcare professionals, and housing/public works officials. During the new administration in 2007, the police were removed from the centres, but returned in June 2012. Currently the centres are headed by community police officers, and it is difficult to determine the level of participation and mandate other agencies have to work within the programme.

While *Urban Renewal 2.0* focuses on a community policing approach to crime prevention, *Operation Ceasefire* is oriented to crime suppression. The programme is adapted from the famous intervention in Boston (since replicated in cities around the world), which focused on two aspects of violence: gangs and guns. In The Bahamas, the programme is envisioned to include saturation patrols in crime hot spots, immediate response by law enforcement to violence, a focus on repeat offenders, cracking down on illegal firearms, intervention of “violence breakers” to stop retaliatory violence, and “shock treatment” to show the consequences of violence to youth. The programme is still in its initial phase of implementation.

The *Swift Justice Initiative* aims to reduce the time it takes to bring criminal matters to court. The administration’s original plan for the initiative envisions an increase in resources to the judicial system, coupled with new courts, improved coordination between prosecutors, police, and justice system administrators, and strengthening the witness protection programme to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial process. The programme also foresees creation of a Death Penalty Unit to expedite death penalty appeals and amend sentences in cases that require the death penalty.

Finally the *Safe Bahamas Initiative* includes a number of issues not addressed by the other three components, including drug and gun trafficking, police intelligence and technology, safety of tourists, child molestation, and abuse and domestic violence. The initiative consists of increasing defence force patrols and gun interdiction at ports, expanding the intelligence unit of the RBPF, providing new technological resources, and investing in a state-of-the-art forensics unit. It also seeks to reduce domestic violence through an intervention campaign and tougher penalties for child molestation, as well as a sex offender registry (mandated by the newly approved but not yet implemented Marco Archer Act).

### *The 2012–2016 National Anti-Drug Strategy*

The 2012–2016 National Anti-Drug Strategy, launched in March 2012 under the previous administration of the FNM party, created the National Anti-Drug Secretariat. The strategy document states that:

“Although the exact nature of the link between crime and criminality and drugs is yet to be empirically determined in The Bahamas context, there is no doubt that persons charged and incarcerated in connection with the range of drug offences are burdening the criminal justice system, and are adding to the Prison’s population.” (Ministry of National Security, p. vii)

The strategy is based on a diagnosis of the drug problem in The Bahamas (drug seizures, trends in drug abuse, and the relationship of drugs to crime and treatment and rehabilitation). Its overall objective is to build “collaborative partnerships to curb demand, reduce supply, disrupt trafficking networks, and promote healthy drug-free lifestyles, especially among youth.”<sup>81</sup> The focus of the integrated efforts are to develop around the following core components:

- Curbing demand
- Reducing supply and disrupting trafficking networks
- Strengthening the criminal justice system
- Consolidating institutional frameworks
- Bi-lateral, regional, and international co-operation
- Financial resources and related matters
- Monitoring and evaluation

Unfortunately, it is hard to determine the results of this collaborative initiative involving multiple agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders during the previous administration. Despite clear intentions to monitor and evaluate progress, and to make the initiative “results-based,” no information was provided by the MNS on evaluations or results of the initiative. Although the National Anti-Drug Strategy still exists, the Secretariat and the strategy have been given a limited budget (\$50,000 annually).

#### *Commissioner’s Policing Plans: 2011–2014 Crime Prevention, Intervention, and Response Strategy*

Under the 2009 Police Force Act, the police commissioner is responsible each year for preparing a plan for the minister that includes “the Force’s Priorities for the year, of the financial and human resources expected to be available, and of the proposed broad allocation of those resources, and shall give particulars of – (a) the Forces objectives, (b) the Forces performance targets.” The plan is also often referred to as the Crime Prevention, Intervention, and Response Strategy. Additionally, the commissioner must prepare a report, within six months after the end of each year, on implementation of the plan, including “an assessment of the extent to which the Commissioner’s Policing Plan for that year has been carried out.”<sup>82</sup> The policing plan is publically available on the RBPF website. However, the Commissioner’s Report is not; nor were past reports made available for this report. Furthermore, prior to 2014 no performance measurements were included in the plans, and the proposed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation are still internal. Therefore, it is only possible to analyse the priorities and strategies proposed, which may merely represent good intentions on paper and not actually what was achieved in practice.

As shown in Table 4, policing plan priorities have remained fairly consistent over the last four years, with the addition of new priorities surrounding professionalizing the police (introduced in

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<sup>81</sup> As stated by The Honourable Tommy Turnquest, Minister Of National Security, at the launch of the 2012–2016 National Anti-Drug Strategy (Ministry of National Security, 2012, p. 2).

<sup>82</sup> Police Force Act 2009, Article 10 (2).



2012 and altered to “restoring public confidence in the police” in 2014) and better fiscal management (introduced in 2013). Priority 2 in 2013 and 2014 reflects the new attention dedicated not only to reducing crime itself, but also to reducing the fear of crime. New priorities in 2014 include increasing public trust and confidence in the police and protection of the tourism industry.

Priorities 1, 2, 4, and 5 over the years are consistently fairly standard goals for police forces around the world (reducing crime, improving public safety, managing traffic, and policing borders). Priority 3 seems relatively unique for its focus on improving the police relationship with youth, while 6 and 7 are focused internally on improving police training, services, and resource management.

**Table 4: Commissioner’s Policing Plan Priorities, 2011–2014**

2011	2012	2013	2014
1. Reducing Crime	1. Tackling Crime	1. Tackling Crime	1. Prevention and Detection of Crime
2. Enhancing Public Safety	2. Improving Community Safety	2. Reducing Violence and Driving Down the Fear of Crime	2. Reducing the Fear of Crime
3. Positively Engaging Young People	3. Positive Youth Engagement	3. Positively Engaging our Young People	3. Working with Young People
4. Better Traffic Management	4. Enforcing the Rules of the Road	4. Enforcing the Rules of the Road	4. Safety and Security of the Public
5. Protecting Our Borders	5. Protecting Our Borders	5. Protecting Our Borders	5. Protection of the Tourist Industry
	6. Professionalizing the Service	6. Professionalizing the Service	6. Restoring Public Confidence in the Police
		7. Better Fiscal Management	7. Efficient Management of Resources

Note: The priorities in 2014 are listed in a slightly different order than they appear in the 2014 Commissioner’s Policing Plan in order to illustrate the continuity between 2011–2014 priorities.

**Priority 1**, reduction of crime, has focused mainly on the arrest of prolific offenders and seizure of/arrest for illegal firearms, ammunition, and drugs. In 2014, this priority was broken down into four components:

- *Crime prevention*: Saturation policing in areas of high crime; use of Geographic Information System tools to map crimes; CompStat (short for “complaint statistics”) meetings to determine how to deploy officers; a Situation Room with trained crime analysts to monitor crime trends; extended closed-circuit television surveillance; and the use of the National Crime Prevention Office and Urban Renewal Centres to promote prevention and identify problems within communities.
- *Crime detection*: Strengthening intelligence (Central Detection Unit, Firearms Tracing and Investigation Unit, Digital Forensic Investigations Unit, and a new Anti-Gang Unit), targeting repeat offenders, monitoring offenders on bail, and increasing resources to cold case analysis of unsolved murders.

- *Evidence and prosecution:* Training for detectives on evidence collection, exhibits, arrest and interviewing of suspects, and improved cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General and the judiciary.
- *Support from other agencies:* Working closely with national agencies (customs, immigration, prison, defence) and international and regional partners on cross-border organized crime.

**Priority 2** involves the relationship between the police and the communities they serve. It generally reflects a recognition starting in 2011 that community involvement and mobilization is critical to improving community safety. Over the years, this priority has focused on mobilizing community watch groups, implementing community policing, and strengthening ties between the police and NGOs and community leaders. The introduction of the concept of addressing “fear of crime” (2013/2014) would seem a natural evolution of this community safety component. It reflects recognition that fear of crime may be related to factors other than changes in crime levels themselves (such as confidence in the police, community cohesion, and environmental factors). In 2014, this aspect of the plan focused intensely on reducing fear through a more visible police presence, public education to reduce fear and dispel myths about crime, working with media to be more accurate and less sensationalist, and continuing community policing.

**Priority 3** focuses on positively engaging youth and aims to ensure continued work with the Ministry of Education and schools to educate children and youth about crime and alcohol and substance abuse. It also promotes conflict resolution programmes, with assistance from Urban Renewal 2.0 teams. Activities include the School Policing Programme (officers providing security at schools), Community Crime Prevention Musical Bands, Police Summer Youth Programmes, Youth Athletic Clubs, and Sports Programmes. This priority area also requires working closely with social services to identify children and young persons at risk and make early interventions where alternatives to criminal proceedings are appropriate.

**Priority 4** focused more heavily on management of street traffic in 2011, 2012, and 2013, but in 2014 it was expanded to encapsulate general maintenance of a law-abiding and orderly society. This includes maintaining order on the streets, encouraging organized community activities in public spaces, and addressing quality of life issues such as trash disposal, loud music, abandoned buildings, etc.

**Priority 5** focuses on controlling borders, which has always been of particular concern in The Bahamas considering its geographical make-up (700 islands and keys), its location (in the corridor where drugs and weapons flow to and from the Americas), and its nature as a major tourist destination. In 2011–2013, this priority focused mainly on building capacity in intelligence, improving marine and air capabilities, and cooperating with regional and international law enforcement (Caribbean Community, Interpol, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives). However, in 2014, there was a marked shift toward focusing on protection of the tourism industry. The plan states:

“Although the risk of tourists becoming victims of crime is low, the perception, often fuelled by the media, is otherwise and special emphasis will be given to high visibility policing in those areas of The Bahamas frequented by tourists. To this extent, the police will work with the Ministry of Tourism and other agencies to provide a safe and more secure environment.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See the Foreword of the Royal Bahamas Police Force Commissioner’s 2014 Policing Plan at [http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/aboutus/cop\\_plan\\_2014/Foreword.php](http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/aboutus/cop_plan_2014/Foreword.php).

**Priority 6** was introduced as “professionalizing the police force” in 2012 after a particularly difficult year of high violence and crime in 2011. At the time there was recognition of the need to improve the training and professional image of the police force in the eyes of the public. In the 2011 plan that created this new priority, the commissioner wrote:

“We have heard far too many complaints from members of the public relative to unethical and unprofessional behaviour by police officers. We understand the untold damage that this can do to the reputation and credibility of the Force. We also understand that this can also severely erode public confidence in the police Force. Without the confidence and support of the public members of the Force cannot be effective in the discharge of their duties.”<sup>84</sup>

Similar sentiments are echoed in the 2014 Policing Plan, which provides directions for making the police code of ethics and standards clear within the force and known to the public and increasing accountability by encouraging the public to report unprofessional behaviour. It further states that complaints and misbehaviour should be investigated and disciplinary actions should continue to be dealt with “decisively, firmly and fairly with officers and other members of the RBPF who commit disciplinary or criminal offences.”<sup>85</sup>

**Priority 7** included some effort to define mechanisms and indicators for measuring police performance in the 2014 plan. The section dedicated to “performance measures” states that the RBPF will continue to use accountability mechanisms such as “daily crime briefs, our weekly CompStat meeting, and our monthly productivity reports to gauge the performance of our people.” Division Commanders are required to create monthly productivity reports to demonstrate how they are meeting the performance targets of the policing plan. In addition, the officer in charge of the Strategic Policy and Planning Branch is required to produce weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual statistical crime reports.

The performance indicators set out for the first time in 2014 seem to show a growing recognition of the value of monitoring and evaluating progress. Indicators are divided into three categories: crime prevention and detection (increases and decreases in crimes reported, detected crimes, and seizures of drugs and guns), police accountability (number and nature of complaints, and officers charged with criminal offenses), and operational efficiency (response times, prosecution of minor offenses, number of fixed penalty tickets issued, number of traffic accidents, number of traffic offenses prosecuted, and arrests for public disorder) (Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2014).

#### *National Gender Equality Policy and Strategic Plan to Address Gender-based Violence*

At the time of this report, the Bureau of Women’s Affairs was completing a Draft National Gender Equality Policy. The initiative, which began in 2012, grew out of a previous Gender Needs Assessment in 2009. Both the needs assessment and subsequent work to draft the National Gender Equality Policy were supported technically and financially by the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). One of the seven goals contained in the draft policy is to develop and implement integrated measures to alleviate, prevent, and manage gender-based violence. The specific objectives under that goal include the following:

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<sup>84</sup> See “Priority Six” of the Royal Bahamas Police Force Commissioner’s 2012 Policing Plan at [http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/aboutus/cop\\_plan\\_2012/service.php](http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/aboutus/cop_plan_2012/service.php)

<sup>85</sup> See “3. Restoring and Maintaining Public Trust and Confidence” in The Royal Bahamas Police Force Commissioner’s 2014 Policing Plan at [http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/aboutus/cop\\_plan\\_2014/Restoring%20and%20Maintaining%20Public.php](http://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/aboutus/cop_plan_2014/Restoring%20and%20Maintaining%20Public.php).

- Develop a comprehensive multi-sectorial plan to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence in keeping with the provisions of international conventions to which The Bahamas is signatory
- Promote speedy access to and timely administration of justice for victims of all forms of gender-based violence
- Improve strategies for eliminating trafficking in persons.<sup>86</sup>

Some of the draft strategies for achieving the objectives to date include the following:

- Develop a public education programme addressing entrenched notions of gender and the ways in which these contribute to gender-based violence
- Sensitize the judiciary, attorneys, law enforcement, medical personnel, social workers, clergy, and educators to all forms of gender-based violence
- Review existing legislation, and amend and codify the law on gender-based violence
- Train media personnel and advertising agencies on the impact of negative gender stereotyping on reinforcing a culture of violence
- Strengthen and expand mandatory psycho-educational programmes for perpetrators
- Extend the 24-hour hotline to enable Family Island residents to voice complaints of gender-based violence and learn about the services available to victims of it
- Provide adequately resourced government shelters structurally designed to accommodate mothers and children in strategic locations across the archipelago to serve the victims of gender-based violence
- Provide and increase government support to NGOs to assist victims of gender-based violence
- Collect comprehensive statistical data on gender-based violence, disaggregated by sex, age, and the relationship between the victim and perpetrators, and including data on the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions, and sentences imposed on perpetrators of gender-based violence
- Incorporate gender-based violence in Health and Family Life Education Programmes in primary and secondary schools, including strengthening school child support services
- Establish a Victims Advocacy Programme and institutional arrangements between social sector, law enforcement, and judicial agencies in order to empower victims to strategically negotiate all stages of the judicial process, with a view to promoting access to judicial remedies and securing the effectiveness of those remedies
- Strengthen the Family Court System.<sup>87</sup>

Beginning in August 2012, a National Task Force on Gender-based Violence was formed that included representatives from the Bureau of Women's Affairs, the public health sector, the RBPF, the Bahamas Crisis Centre, the College of The Bahamas, and other civil society organizations. After a series of presentations by the police, victim support organizations, and medical experts on the nuances of gender-based violence in the Bahamas, the task force began drafting a report that includes a strategic plan to address gender-based violence. The plan includes sections drafted by committees on legal, psychosocial, and media-related issues.

*10-Year Education Plan and Safe Schools Protocol*

In 2009, the Ministry of Education launched both the 10-Year Education Plan and the Safe Schools Protocol. The 10-year plan includes a section on school safety and reducing violence

<sup>86</sup> National Gender Equality Policy for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Draft 3, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-26.

(Goal 17) that outlines in broad strokes the short- and long-term objectives to reduce school violence.<sup>88</sup> The Safe School Protocol attempts to guide teachers in regulating three types of violence in schools: violence between students, punishment of students, and identification/reporting of child abuse (Department of Education, 2012).<sup>89</sup>

The numerous objectives listed under Goal 17 (“Reducing School Violence and Creating Safe Learning Environments”) of the 10-year plan can generally be categorized into the following components:<sup>90</sup>

1. Presence of security guards and monitoring devices (metal detectors and closed-circuit television cameras)
2. Helping teachers to discipline students in non-violent ways (conflict resolution training, Safe Schools Protocol of discipline procedures)
3. Conflict resolution for students
4. Alternative education for at-risk students and provision of extra-curricular programmes.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education announced a partnership with Urban Renewal 2.0 to place school-based police officers in Bahamian schools. According to the ministry, school-based police officers are now posted in junior and senior schools in New Providence. The ministry also reports that “We have begun an initiative on the closed-circuit television cameras and most of the Junior & Senior Schools have metal detectors on the compound.”<sup>91</sup> While anecdotal evidence suggests that administrators feel this has made a positive contribution to school security, no evaluation of school policing or other security measures has been conducted. International studies in this area show that there is no clear evidence that the use of metal detectors, security cameras, or guards in schools is effective in preventing school violence.<sup>92</sup> Security cameras may simply make students move fights and misbehaviour to places not covered by cameras or outside of schools. Metal detectors would seem to be an odd initiative in Bahamian schools, given that the number of fights and the disrespecting of teachers were far more prevalent than weapons possession in reports from schools last year. Studies show that while metal detectors may have a moderate effect on carrying a weapon at school, there is generally no significant change in carrying a weapon in other settings (to and from school), nor a decline in participation in physical fights.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, some research suggests the presence of security guards and metal detectors in schools negatively affects students’ perceptions of safety and even increases fear (Bachman, Randolph, and Brown, 2011).

The second category of objectives in the 10-year plan regarding violence is to help teachers control violence and misbehaviour by non-violent means. The Safe Schools Protocol outlines the progressive consequences for student misbehaviour and also regulates the use of corporal punishment that teachers may inflict on students.<sup>94</sup> While the protocol promotes the use of non-violent punishments first, it also permits the principal or administrator to use corporal punishment. As such, the protocol determines the level of violence that the State sanctions to

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<sup>88</sup> A draft version of the plan (dated August 11, 2009) is available at <http://www.bahamaseducation.com/PDF/Docs/Draft%2010%20Year%20Education%20Plan.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> The Fourth Revision (dated December 2009) of the Safe Schools Protocol is available at <http://www.bahamaseducation.com/PDF/Publications/ManualforStudents.pdf>.

<sup>90</sup> See Annex 6 of this report for the complete list of objectives.

<sup>91</sup> Personal communication with Ms. Zoey Powell, Ministry of Education, April 24, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> See Hankin, Hertz, and Simon (2011); Borum et al. (2010); Addington (2009); and Casella (2006).

<sup>93</sup> Ginsberg and Loffredo (1993) found that, of a sample of 2,100 high schools students in New York, 7.8 per cent in schools with metal detectors reported carrying a weapon to school versus 13.8 per cent in schools with no metal detectors. No difference was found in the prevalence of carrying weapons outside of school or in the prevalence of threats of violence.

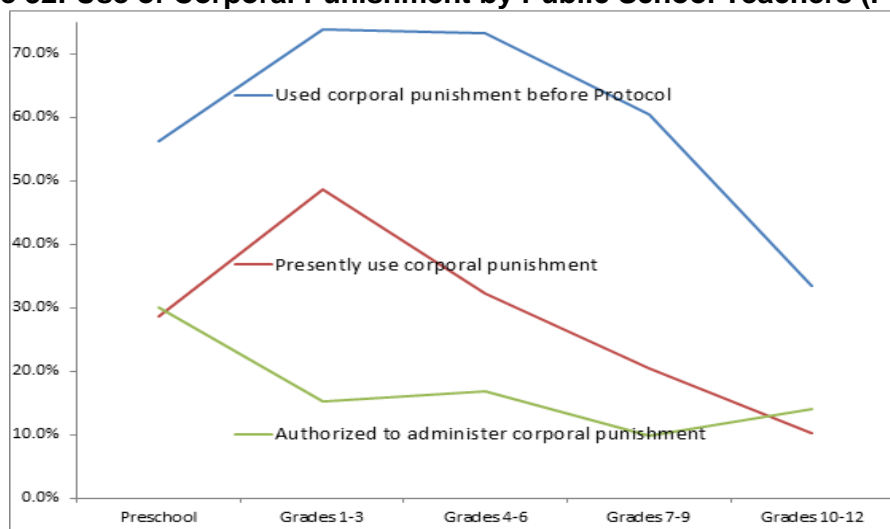
<sup>94</sup> Note that the Safe Schools Protocol Manual was developed by the Ministry of Education in consultation with The Bahamas Union of Teachers, Parent Teachers Associations, the police, the Advisory Council on Education, SCAN, and the Department of Social Services.

be used in schools. The protocol requires that corporal punishment be “limited to highly restricted circumstances” after “a full inquiry has been carried out” and “must be adequately documented” (Bahamas Department of Education, p. 30).

The protocol requires school administrators to create individual Safe Schools Plans with a team representing all aspects of the community, beginning with a survey assessment of problems and followed by strategies to address the needs encountered. The Ministry of Education was unable to verify how many schools had complied by 2014. Specific initiatives to tailor and disseminate the protocol at the district level were identified in the Northwestern and Southeastern Districts.

A 2012 survey of teachers provides additional clues as to the implementation of the protocol and changes in classroom procedures. The survey of 482 school teachers revealed that most teachers knew about the protocol (91.4 per cent) and 64 per cent claimed that their classroom rules were aligned with it. Of those who knew about the protocol, a minority discussed it with students (30.3 per cent). Since the protocol, fewer teachers reported using corporal punishment: 60.6 per cent compared to 28.7 per cent afterwards (Figure 34). However, 15.3 per cent of teachers still believed they were authorized to use it and 4.3 per cent were not sure. When separated by grade level, it becomes apparent that corporal punishment is used much more frequently in grades 1-3 (nearly 50 per cent of the time) (Fielding, 2012).

**Figure 32: Use of Corporal Punishment by Public School Teachers (Percent)**



Source: Fielding (2012).

#### **IV. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS FOR REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE BAHAMAS**

This section presents a summary of the 33 programmes, projects, and interventions identified in The Bahamas, between January and May 2014, that contributed to preventing or reducing crime and violence. More detailed information on each of these initiatives can be found in Annex 7. The initiatives presented in no way represent an exhaustive list of all such programmes in The Bahamas, and the list is heavily concentrated in New Providence. This geographical concentration reflects both the primary focus of government initiatives on this topic – over 70 per cent of the population lives in New Providence and an overwhelming majority of crimes recorded by the police occur on the island – and the limitations in scope of this reported,

including limited time and resources, which led to research focusing primarily in New Providence.

This report sought to incorporate a wide range of public and non-profit programmes that work with communities, potential or actual victims, or perpetrators of violence and crime. Different programmes identified work with these target beneficiaries before, during, or after a crime or violent act occurs. Information on these programmes was gathered via phone or in-person interviews, and organizations and agencies were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding the type, geographical scope, beneficiaries, resources, evaluation strategy, and outcomes of their interventions (Annex 3). Unfortunately, in many cases not all of this information was available. Programmes that had an evaluation strategy were scarce and no robust impact evaluations were identified. The lack of documentation of programme designs, implementation, and evaluation is a major challenge in The Bahamas that is discussed further in Sections V and VI of this report.

Rather than presenting programmes organized according to their implementing agency or organization, this report classifies them in a manner that illustrates who is working with which target groups and on what aspects of the problem. The intention is to highlight which organizations and agencies are working in common areas – where collaboration could be beneficial – and to identify any gaps that are not being addressed.

There are many possible ways to classify crime and violence prevention and reduction strategies. Scholars of criminology have often divided strategies into “control” and “prevention” – the former relating to traditional policing, arrest, and incarceration, and the latter to interventions that prevent a crime from happening before it is committed (Sherman et al., 1998; Welsh and Farrington, 2012). The public health approach has also been widely used to categorize violence prevention based on the continuum of when the intervention takes place – primary prevention (before violence occurs), secondary prevention (immediate response to violent act), and tertiary prevention (long-term response afterward to prevent the violence from happening again) (WHO, 2002). This report applies an adapted version of the public health categorization that also includes control initiatives under the category of “Suppression.”

Thus, programmes are grouped into four categories:

- *Primary prevention programmes*
- *Secondary prevention (intervention) programmes*
- *Suppression initiatives*
- *Tertiary prevention (rehabilitation) programmes*

It should be noted that some programmes are cross-cutting across categories or have activities that fit in more than one category. Each of the programmes discussed in this section are described in more detail in Annex 7.

## **Primary Prevention Programmes**

Primary prevention programmes are those that aim to prevent a crime or violent act from happening in the first place. As such they include a wide range of initiatives that target the population as a whole, or communities specifically at risk, in order to reduce risk factors, increase protective factors, and reduce the opportunity for crime and violence to occur. While many social programmes that focus on poverty reduction, employment, improved education,

and similar initiatives may contribute to reducing violence in the long term, a programme was not included in this report if its primary objectives did not explicitly include preventing violent or criminal behaviour, or reducing the opportunity for violence and crime to occur,.

This category is further divided into initiatives that focus on *situational and community variables* that can help prevent crime and violence, and on the development of *individual behaviours, beliefs, or skills* (conflict resolution skills, aggression management, etc.).

### *Situational and Community Prevention*

Four initiatives identified in The Bahamas can be categorized as situational or community prevention because they focus on reducing the opportunities for crime and violence to occur through community mobilization (awareness-raising, advocacy, neighbourhood watch, community policing, etc.) or through the design and maintenance of public spaces and the use of new technologies (street lighting, use of security cameras, etc.). The initiatives in this category are outlined in Table 5.

### *Individual Behaviours*

Primary prevention can also focus on preventing violent and delinquent behaviours and beliefs from developing within the population. Such programmes in The Bahamas focus on improving parenting skills, helping youth foster positive identities and follow positive role models, helping children develop skills and attitudes that prevent bullying in schools, and building networks of positive male leaders who speak out against gender-based violence. The initiatives in this category are outlined in Table 6.

## **Secondary Prevention**

These programmes intervene in the early stages of violence in order to prevent the situation from accelerating. They target children, youth, women, or families specifically identified as being at risk of being or becoming victims or perpetrators of violence and crime. These programmes intervene before early behaviours turn into serious delinquency or violence, or to prevent a victim of violence from being further victimized or traumatized.

The category is further divided into programmes that *target victims* and those that *target early delinquent and violent behaviour*. The former aim to identify victims and provide support services, including grief and trauma counselling and legal, financial, and emotional support. They help reduce the chances of continued victimization, trauma, and retaliation after violence or crime has taken place. Initiatives in the latter group of programmes target early disruptive, angry, or delinquent behaviours to stop individuals from becoming more violent or committing more serious crimes. The secondary prevention programmes are summarized in Table 7.

## **Suppression**

The programmes presented here are those that focus on improving the functions of the criminal justice system or implementing innovative ways to deter crime by better identifying, targeting, arresting, and prosecuting perpetrators of violence and crime. Five such programmes were identified in the Bahamas for this report. They focus on improving policing, targeting retaliatory violence and repeat offenders, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system (Table 7).



## Tertiary Prevention

Tertiary prevention involves programmes that target individuals or families who have already been involved in harmful, violent, or criminal activities to help them develop strategies to avoid perpetuating violence and crime in the future. Tertiary prevention programmes may work with offenders who are re-entering the community after confinement, or provide a range of services from counselling to social services and monitoring re-integration into the community with a focus on reducing recidivism. In The Bahamas these programmes are few and far between. This report found only one government-run programme for youth who had committed crimes and none for adults who had completed their sentences. At the time of this report the Ministry of Social Services confirmed that its parole system is defunct. To be granted early leave prisoners must apply for clemency via the Prerogative Board of Mercy. Probation officers help prepare reports, but no one has been released early in the past few years.<sup>95</sup> Several half-way houses run by NGOs provide housing, counselling, and support to ex-offenders. Only one existing programme for ex-offenders was found that is not faith-based and that is seeking to implement evidence-based practices – the National L.E.A.D. Institute’s Project Re-Entry. Even this initiative is still in its initial stages and could not be evaluated for efficacy. This is clearly an area where more programmes and projects are needed to help reduce recidivism and break the cycle of violence in The Bahamas. Table 8 provides information on the tertiary programmes identified.

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Social Services Department of Rehabilitation, May 13, 2014. Note that the introduction of the Correctional Services Act in the latter half of 2014 (see annex 8) seems a promising step forward.

**Table 5: Primary Prevention: Situational and Community Prevention**

<b>Agency/ Organization</b>	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Ministry of Public Works/Royal Bahamas Police Force	Urban Renewal 2.0	2002–2007; the police were removed from the programme in 2007 but returned in 2012	This community outreach and crime prevention programme is designed to respond directly to the problems of inner-city communities such as crime, poor housing, unemployment, and other social ills. Police officers, social service, and environmental health workers stationed at Urban Renewal Centres help respond to community concerns and needs.	Nine policing districts in New Providence, seven in Grand Bahamas and one in Abaco.	Information requested but not provided	None provided
Bahamas Against Crime	Bahamas Against Crime civil society movement	2007–present	Led by Rev. C.B. Moss, this is a not-for-profit organization, developed by the Council for Social Economic Development, the Bahamas Christian Council, and Civil Society Bahamas that aims to raise awareness and mobilize communities and society to unite against violence and crime.	All civil society	Information requested but not provided	None conducted
Royal Bahamas Police Force	National Crime Prevention Office (NCPO)	2010–present	The NCPO was established to raise public awareness and improve the quality of life by creating safer communities through education and initiatives to reduce crime opportunities. The primary role of the NCPO is to serve as the clearinghouse for crime prevention activities throughout The Bahamas.	All Bahamians	Information requested but not provided	None conducted

Royal Bahamas Police Force	Closed Circuit Television Project	2011–present	Involves the installation of 243 closed circuit television cameras in high-crime areas, at tourist attractions, and in business districts and vulnerable locations in order to keep watch over activities and deter crime. By March 2014, 217 cameras had been installed and 10 officers were dedicated to work on the project.	Residents of New Providence	\$4.6 million	None conducted
Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF)	Firearms Marking and Destruction	2011– present	As part of a regional project sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS), a firearm marking machine and a firearm destruction machine were provided to The Bahamas and officers were trained to use them. The aim is to stem the flow of weapons from legal owners and the State to the illegal market. Data show 32.6 per cent of firearms seized (2011–2013) have been marked along with 10 percent of RBPF weapons. Of the weapons seized over the past five years, 44 per cent have been destroyed.	All Bahamians	Information unavailable (equipment and training provided by OAS and UNLirec)	None conducted

**Table 6: Primary Prevention: Individual Behaviours**

Agency/ Organization	Initiative	Duration	Description	Beneficiaries	Cost	Evaluation
Ministry of Social Services and Community Development	National Parenting Programme	1994– present	Prepares and trains parents for their parenting role and responsibilities, which will help build stronger families and better communities. Parents for the most part have children who are receiving counselling from the Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services, are detained at the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls or the Simpson Penn Centre for boys, or are referred by the courts and social services.	930 parents in 2013	\$30,000 (2012/2013)	None provided

Youth Against Violence	Hope Centre mentoring and basketball	1995– present	Youth Against Violence is run by a former gang member who organizes basketball tournaments with young men offering them positive role models and activities to help keep them out of gangs. One female and one male group of youth are mentored focusing on four areas: God, authority, yourself, and others. Mentoring addresses bullying, fights in school, anger management, and self-esteem.	30-45 youth in grades 5-9	Information requested but not provided	None conducted
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Super Me!	2013–present	The programme includes 15-minute modules twice a week with students, for four weeks, to help them become more self-assured, positive, confident, gracious, aware, and more passionate about who they are and who they can be. Children learn to apply essential tools to resolve conflicts and challenges, accept differences as a gift, and work together with classmates.	13,000 students in primary schools in New Providence, Eleuthera, and special programmes (SURE, PACE)	Information requested but not provided	No formal evaluation has been conducted, but satisfaction surveys from teachers and testimonials indicate some potentially positive results
The Caribbean Male Action Network (CARIMAN)/ UN Women	Champions of Change	2012– present	CARIMAN carries out activities in several Caribbean countries to promote gender justice, social harmony, and peaceful partnerships. Its flagship project, Champions for Change, is supported by UN Women and is being conducted in The Bahamas to work toward eliminating gender based-violence by engaging men as partners in advocacy and action.	Information not available	Information requested but not provided	None conducted

**Table 7: Secondary Prevention: Targeting Victims**

Agency/ Organization	Initiative	Duration	Description	Beneficiaries	Cost	Evaluation
The Bahamas Crisis Centre	Victim Support Services	1982– present	The centre promotes the safety and healing of survivors of gender-based violence and child abuse with counselling, legal support services, and a 24-hour hotline; works to raise the consciousness of all communities throughout The Bahamas to the devastating effects of violence on the quality of life; and advocates for legislative change to protect victims of violence and challenges relevant agencies to foster appropriate and sensitive responses to these issues.	Men, women, and children experiencing any form of violence. In 2013, the centre had 264 new patients and 1,084 continuing patients.	Information requested but not provided	None conducted
Royal Bahamas Police Force	Victim Support Unit	2007– present	The unit is comprised of trained individuals who are empathetic to victims and their family needs, providing free support for victims of any crime in a confidential environment. The goals are to provide comprehensive services to all areas of the community and to work for the rights of victims, witnesses, and their families.	Victims of crimes, particularly domestic violence, rape, and family of homicide victims	Information requested but not provided	None provided
Ministry of Health	Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) and Sexual Abuse Follow-up and Evaluation (SAFE)	1999– present	SCAN provides a link between agencies that advocate for children, including Social Service/Child Protective Services, Police/CID Forensics, Health Social Services, Crisis Centre, Adolescent Health Centre, Accident and Emergency, Children’s Ward, Ministry of Education, Psychological Services, Attorney General’s Office, and several NGOs. SCAN offers care, and support to help prevent future abuse of children/adolescents	SCAN targets children up to age 12 who have been sexually abused; SAFE targets children ages 13 and older. SCAN handled 150 cases in 2013.	\$28,147 (2013) SCAN	Currently conducting audits of clinics where doctors and nurses have been trained to examine how well the protocols are being followed. No results could be provided.

Ministry of Social Services and Community Development	Child Protection Services Unit		The Child Protection Services Unit is the primary section with direct responsibility for providing intervention as well as ongoing management in cases of child maltreatment in The Bahamas. It also investigates cases involving the physical, sexual, emotional, and verbal abuse of children.	Physically, sexually, and emotionally abused or abandoned children; 490 children were attended to in 2013.	Information requested but not provided	None conducted
Ministry of Social Services and Community Development	National Child Abuse Hotline		The hotline uses trained social workers to answer calls to determine the necessary intervention or course of action, provide advice, and connect victims to the support services available.	246 calls were received in 2013; it is estimated that three of 10 cases requires intervention by the police or social services.	Information requested but not provided	None conducted
Families of All Murder Victims (FOAM)	Support to families of murder victims	2012–present	FOAM was founded by the family member of two murder victims and is designed to offer wrap-around support to families of murder victims including grief counselling, financial and emotional support, and follow-up on cases through the justice system.	150 families in 2013	Information not available	None conducted
The Family	The Family: People Helping People	2008–present	The programme consists of free community therapy groups integrating spirituality and psychology. These groups deal with re-socialization, interpersonal skills, self-esteem enhancement, anger management and conflict resolution, elimination of revenge, and community bonding.	Groups of between 10-50 individuals in 15 communities.	Information requested but not provided	A pilot evaluation was conducted

## Secondary Prevention: Targeting Early Delinquent or Violent Behaviours

Agency/ Organization	Initiative	Duration	Description	Beneficiaries	Cost	Evaluation
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology/ North Eastern Pastors Alliance	Student Re-Focus Support Programme	2012	Works with youth with behaviour problems and includes three components: prevention, intervention, and restoration. Prevention includes empowerment programmes for boys and girls in primary, junior, and secondary schools. Intervention is for students who have been suspended and is implemented in 14 suspension centres. It includes academic tutoring, social skills, anger management, conflict resolution, and substance abuse counselling. Restoration includes follow-up on students who have returned from suspension over the next semester.	699 suspended students with behaviour problems, grade 7-12.	Information requested but not provided	In 2013, school guidance counsellors were asked to rate improvement in participants' behaviour.
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Success Ultimately Reassures Everyone (SURE)	1992–present	SURE is an alternative education programme operated by the Ministry of Education that is designed to assist male students who are struggling with successfully completing their time in traditional secondary schools. Students are released from regular campuses for a period of three to six months and attend the SURE campus to receive instruction. Students who are selected are typically chronically disruptive students.	96 male students ages 14-17 in 2013.	Information requested but not provided	None provided

National Leadership, Ability, Esteem, Discipline (L.E.A.D.) Institute	The Eagle Academy and the Life Management Male Empowerment Programme	2010–present	The Eagle Academy is an alternative school for expelled boys. The goal is to reduce aggressive and negative behaviour in young males, enabling them to positively interact and socialize; empower them with life management skills to enable them to build character and solid values, encouraging self-esteem and boosting morale; and empower them to complete their high school education and become productive citizens.	Between 40 and 60 young males per year who are referred by public schools or the juvenile justice system.	\$96,000–\$120,000 per year	None conducted
Teen Challenge	Temperament Development Empowerment Programme/ substance abuse	1988–present	This programme targets teens who have been in trouble with the law and/or are suffering from substance abuse. A one-year residential rehab programme is available for substance abuse and a six-month programme for youth in conflict with the law referred by the courts. The latter includes weekly courses on anger management, conflict resolution, empowerment, and life skills. The programmes are run by former gang member Eric Fox, who entered the rehabilitation programme in 1988.	In 2013, 39 walk-in clients, 38 court referrals, and 65 suspended students.	\$150,000	None conducted
Ministry of Social Services and Community Development	Boys and Girls Group	2004–present	The Boys and Girls Group consists of clients between the ages of 12 and 17 who have committed criminal acts, in addition to those deemed at risk of becoming involved in criminal	In 2013, 112 youth ages 12-17.	\$500	None conducted



activities (considered beyond parental control by the courts and social services). Participants engage in group discussions and share their experiences. The aim is that beneficiaries find support in a cohesive environment among those who share similar experiences.

**Table 8: Suppression**

Agency/ Organization	Initiative	Duration	Description	Beneficiaries	Cost	Evaluation
Ministry of National Security	Operation Ceasefire	2012–present	Modelled after successful programmes in Boston and Chicago, this programme aims to (1) provide an immediate response to violence with saturation patrols in crime hot spots, focusing on repeat offenders, (2) crack down on illegal firearms, (3) provide interventions with “violence breakers” to stop retaliatory violence, (4) use “shock treatment” for youth in conflict with the law to show the negative consequences of a life of crime, and (5) provide safe havens from violence for youth.	Different components of the programme target different beneficiaries, ranging from serious repeat offenders to at-risk youth and communities with high crime and violence.	The overall budget for this programme was not available. It is estimated that the cost would be \$80,000 for the “shock treatment” component and \$150,000 for the “violence breakers” component.	None yet conducted
Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF)	CompStat and hot spot policing	2000–present (CompStat), now complemented by a Geographic Information System (GIS)	The RBPF employs the GIS to map crime and identify problems for hot spot policing. In weekly CompStat meetings, ranking officers meet with district commanders to discuss problems and devise strategies to reduce crime.	Communities where crime hot spots are concentrated.	Information not available	None provided

Office of the Attorney General	Swift Justice Initiative (SJI)	Pilot initiative began in November 2013	As one of the components of the Project Safe Bahamas policy framework, the SJI aims to increase the capacity of the judicial system to expedite the process of trying and convicting those found guilty of serious crimes. It includes improving court reporting and transcript generation, implementing an Integrated Justice Information System, and targeted action to reduce the backlog of pending cases at the Supreme Court level.	Beneficiaries include both the victims of crimes and the defendants accused, who should benefit from more speedy trials. No information could be obtained on the number of individuals who have benefited from the pilot programme to date.	\$274,000 for pilot (18 months)	None conducted
Ministry of National Security	Electronic monitoring of persons on bail	2010–present	The electronic monitoring system forms a part of the government’s overall strategy to increase efficiency in the criminal justice system. It aims to improve the current system of pre-trial supervision (and post-trial supervision pending the appropriate legislation) to monitor low-risk offenders. The ministry envisions the electronic monitoring system as an effective alternative to placing offenders on remand (pre-trial detention) at Foxhill Prison while awaiting trial.	Non-violent and juvenile criminals who are neither flight risks nor pose endangerment to society; 400 individuals have been monitored from 2010 to the present.	\$2.1 million	None provided
Ministry of National Security	Remand court		The Remand Court was envisioned to expeditiously conduct hearings of offenders on remand (pre-trial detention) at Foxhill Prison near the prison in order to avoid transporting the prisoners to the downtown area.	Pre-trial detainees who would benefit from speedy trials. No information was available on the number of individuals who have benefited from the initiative.	Information requested but not provided	None provided

**Table 9: Tertiary Prevention**

<b>Agency/ Organization</b>	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Ministry of Social Services and Community Development	Aftercare	1979–present	Aftercare services are provided for one year and are designed to address treatment needs and to prepare residents from the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls and Simpson Penn Centre for boys to return to the community.	Juveniles 12-17 returning to the community after confinement in a detention centre; 50 youths benefited from the programme in 2012/2013.	Information requested but not provided	None provided
National L.E.A.D. Institute	Project Re-Entry Bahamas	2011–present	The programme includes a one-week pre-release and subsequent post-release component. It also includes a Life Management Male Empowerment component within prisons for juveniles on remand; a similar programme has been working with two prisons in North Carolina with young men imprisoned there before they return to The Bahamas.	12 former offenders and three inmates in 2014.	Estimated cost of \$300,760 annually	None conducted
Prison Fellowship	Prison Fellowship	1985–present	Prison Fellowship is an international initiative that helps local churches mobilise resources and volunteers to minister to prisoners and restore their relationships with their families through in-prison spiritual counselling and faith-based re-entry programmes..	Up to 100 individuals annually inside and outside prison.	\$34,000 annually	None conducted
The Bahamas Association for Social Health (BASH)	Half-way house and substance abuse rehabilitation	1991–present	BASH is a male drug treatment, rehabilitation and half-way house. The centre holds 33 individuals, many of whom have come directly out of prison or have been arrested before..	Former addicts and ex-prisoners.	No information provided	None conducted
Dean Granger Centre	Half-way house	1987–present	The Dean Granger Centre was started 27 years ago as a half-way house for ex-offenders. It provides housing and some spiritual guidance to beneficiaries.	40-45 former addicts and ex-prisoners.	\$15,000 annually	None conducted

Great Commissions Ministries International	The Hope House	1987–present	The Hope House is a half-way house for ex-offenders and substance abusers that also provides community service jobs as an alternative sentence to first-time offenders.	100 ex-offenders and substance abusers, and 40 individuals with alternative sentences in 2013	\$50,000 per month	None conducted
Teen Challenge Bahamas	Half-way house rehabilitation		Teen Challenge Bahamas offers a one-year substance abuse rehabilitation programme and a six-month half-way house for ex-offenders.	Ex-offenders who are substance abusers and/or former gang members	\$150,000 annually	None conducted

## **V. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

The more information that is available, the better we can understand a problem. And the more we understand a problem, the better equipped we are to craft solutions. An examination of the data systems for collecting and analysing violent and criminal behaviour in The Bahamas leads to the inescapable conclusion that the present systems are inadequate. More uniform, transparent, robust, and comprehensive collection and analysis are necessary to better understand the causes and produce more effective interventions. This section examines the administrative data systems in place, relevant surveys conducted, and the use of data, as well as some of the main obstacles impeding better data collection and analysis.

### **What Data Are Collected and Available?**

The two principal sources of data on crime and violence are administrative data, collected regularly by public and non-profit agencies, and survey data. Administrative data collected for this report came predominantly from the RBPF and Ministry of Health. However, some data were also provided by the Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Education, the Department of Correctional Services, and The Bahamas Crisis Centre. The RBPF has a national crime database and provided aggregate crime data for the last five years on 15 types of Crimes Against the Person, 11 types of Crimes Against Property, and six additional crimes in the category of Other Crimes. Some of these data are available on a weekly basis to the public via the crime reports on the RBPF website.

The RBPF Strategic Planning and Analysis Unit is responsible for maintaining the database and generating crime reports. While aggregated statistics were provided on the categories mentioned above, requests to the Ministry of National Security for micro data (disaggregated at the level of each individual crime) were denied. Although the information is of a sensitive nature, many countries make such data available to researchers contingent upon certain terms and conditions. Additionally, limited data on some cross-cutting variables (gender, age, motive, weapon, cases solved) were made available for murder data only, and other variables (place, time of day, relationship of victims to perpetrators) were not provided for murder or any other crime. In light of new initiatives on gender-based violence, the RBPF is currently combing through years of data to determine the percentages of crimes committed against men versus women. While these data are reported to be collected by RBPF officers on crime forms and entered into the data system, they are not made available to the public or to researchers or academics. This would seem to go against the need to build the capacity to analyse crime and violence trends that the nation so clearly needs, especially considering that analytical capacity within the RBPF itself is limited (see later in this section for more details).

Public health data collected and provided by the Ministry of Health via the Public Hospital Authority and the Health Information and Research Unit were provided far more transparently. Mortality data were made available through the most recent year of data release (2010) and included variables such as cause, gender, and age of the victim. Morbidity data, allowing for an analysis of not only deaths but also injuries, were provided (with similar variables) by the two main public hospitals. However, morbidity data are collected only for inpatient treatment, not in the emergency room. Furthermore, the most recent data available were from 2007. Data made available from the emergency room were compiled separately for this report only for cases of shootings, stabbings, and rape. Therefore, information collected on mortality, inpatient morbidity, and emergency room treatment are not comparable, may contain double counting, and do not give a comprehensive picture of the problem. Interviews for this report revealed that

there are extreme difficulties in collecting data in the emergency room setting, and even inpatient injury surveillance faces many obstacles. The information on types of injuries treated for inpatients is collected on a separate paper from the admission sheet and was reported to frequently get lost or not be signed by busy medical personnel. There are additional difficulties regarding where to store paper files and digitalizing the data. There are currently discussions under way regarding a new digital system and clear protocols to be put in place, hopefully to come to fruition in 2016.

Information on the judicial and prison systems was sought via the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and The Department of Correctional Services. To their credit, both of these institutions were very responsive to requests for information and provided what they could. While the OAG was able to eventually calculate the number of cases on backlog, information allowing for measuring progress within the judicial process was limited. Data on the numbers of cases going to trial and ending in convictions, mistrials, and not guilty verdicts were only available as of May 2012. The information provided from the Department of Correctional Services included five years of data on the prison population by age, sex, remand/sentence, and type of crime committed.

The Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Education, and NGOs were also sought out to provide information on types of crime and violence that are frequently underreported to the police, including sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, child abuse, and school violence. The Ministry of Social Services and Community Development was able to provide some information on the number of children who received services for different types of child abuse. This information was likely under-representative of the actual number of cases in society, but could also be complemented by data on calls received via the abuse hotline. However, the abuse hotline also receives calls about other domestic disputes, and the age of the relevant individuals is not recorded, nor is information provided on geographical location, gender, etc.

Regarding domestic violence and violence against women, the data collected by The Bahamas Crisis Centre provided some complementary information to the data collected by the police and the hospitals. Unfortunately, information from the centre was not collected in a uniform way over time. For example, categories listed as the reasons for seeking services change slightly from year to year. Information between these three sources (police, hospitals, and the Crisis Centre) is also not compatible or comparable. The Bahamas could do well to attempt to develop a standardized form for collecting intake data on domestic violence victims, as some other Latin American and Caribbean countries are now attempting to do.

Given the inherent constraints of administrative data – and especially given the potential underreporting and inadequate and potentially inaccurate collection of data in The Bahamas – surveys can be extremely helpful. Unfortunately, a limited number of national surveys have been conducted that contain questions on crime and violence. No victimization surveys were conducted prior to 2014, and most other public surveys have not regularly sought to include questions on violence. Furthermore, the data from those surveys that have been conducted may not be readily available to the public and researchers. The 2001 and 2006 Bahamas Living Conditions Survey contains questions on violence-related injuries, specifically if anyone in the household was shot or stabbed in the last 12 months. However, the 2013 survey seems to have excluded the question. Because of increasing concern about violence at schools, the 2011 Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey included a number of questions about being a victim of violence, abuse, rape, carrying a weapon, and being part of a violent group. Some of the results have been cited previously in this report. In 2013, the Global Youth Health Survey was conducted for the first time in The Bahamas via a partnership between the Pan

American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain the data for this report because the data are embargoed by the Bahamian government for the next two years. Furthermore, the Ministry of National Security launched its own survey in January 2014 when Urban Renewal Officers began conducting The Bahamas Crime and Social & Economic Conditions Community Survey. At the time of this report, the survey was being conducted in all households in three communities: Bain & Grants Town, Centreville, and Englerston. The survey contains questions relating both to the social and economic conditions and to the perceived levels and types of crime in these communities. The survey was implemented by Urban Renewal Officers and individuals from the communities, which could influence the respondents' answers.

Other surveys examined for this report were conducted by researchers of the College of The Bahamas and include the Profile of the Sentenced Inmates at Fox Hill Prison (Minnis, et al., 2011), Domestic Violence in the Homes of College Students in New Providence (Plumridge and Fielding, 2009), and Firearms in Bahamian Homes (Hutcheson, et al. 2011). While these surveys have produced interesting results, many of which have been included in this report, their sampling size and methods often result in their not being statistically representative of the population and do not allow for determining prevalence.

In addition to the limited information available on crime and violence trends, there is a paucity of data available on the implementation and results of the programmes and projects listed in the previous section. While in some cases limited data on programme implementation were provided for this report, quite often the author was not given requested data on details such as the activities completed, number of beneficiaries, cost of programmes, and results produced. In some cases, particularly NGO programmes, interviewees admitted that they simply did not systematically track this information (although many stated they were beginning to pay more attention to this). Of the 31 programmes and projects identified for this study, none were able to share evaluations on programme implementation, let alone on programme impact.

### **Summary of Data Limitations**

Although some of the limitations related to data collection and analysis have been mentioned throughout this report, it is worth revisiting some of them here. It is important to recognize that many of these limitations are not unique to The Bahamas or to the Caribbean region. The limitations can be categorized into four areas: collection, sharing, analysis, and use for design interventions.

Some of the difficulties around data collection in The Bahamas include timely and uniform collection; buy-in from staff; and lack of tools, training, protocols, and incentives for data collection. Regarding the collection of administrative data, the most frequently collected and comprehensive data seem to be found within the RBPF. However, it has been shown in this report that a large portion of the police data underestimates crimes, which may be underreported due to their sensitive nature, fear of retaliation, or lack of trust in the police. This is especially true regarding domestic violence and sexual abuse. Additionally, the information collected may not always be complete, depending on the officers filling out the form and their understanding of the importance of accurate data collection.

Public health data can help to identify some of the crimes and violence that go unreported to the police, but these data have their own limitations. While mortality data may be more complete, it may take more time to collect and compile these data given the need for autopsies and signatures of pathologists. The most recent data available in The Bahamas are more than four

years old. The most recent morbidity data for inpatients at Princess Margaret Hospital are already seven years old, and emergency room data collection is far less nuanced and reliable.

Data from the Ministry of Education on acts of violence at schools are collected only by some schools, using different methods and categories, which renders the data incomparable across schools and districts. Additionally, teachers and school administrators have neither obligation nor incentive to report accurately. However, the ministry is currently working to develop a uniform reporting form.

While the Ministry of Social Services has a standard intake form for abused children, the information collected is not digitalized. Except for the overall number of cases by type of abuse, the additional detailed information on these cases is not compiled in a way that facilitates analysis.

The lack of data sharing is also a major impediment. Micro data (at the level of the individual) were not made available from any of the governmental and non-governmental organizations consulted in The Bahamas for this report. Very little of the aggregate data used in this report are publically available, nor are they even shared between different governmental ministries and agencies. Academics at the College of The Bahamas cited difficulties in obtaining data on crime and violence from government sources. This effectively impedes research on crime and violence, obstructs a holistic understanding of how different types of crime and violence are connected, and hampers collaborative inter-agency solutions.

Perhaps the largest challenge in The Bahamas is developing the capacity for analysis of the data that are collected. While there clearly is a growing understanding about the collection of data, there may not be equal understanding of the importance of investing in analysis. Many of the governmental agencies that collect data have an internal research or statistics unit. For example, the RBPF has the Strategic Policy and Planning Branch and the Ministry of Health has its Health Information and Research Unit. However this report found that while these units are able to generate statistics or quick descriptive reports, little actual analysis of crime and violence trends is performed. Interviews with the RBPF revealed that detailed, medium-to-long-term crime analysis – such as the analysis of homicides over 2000–2009 in Hanna (2011) – is not common. Officers in the Strategic Policy and Planning Branch mentioned that crime analysis is a challenge, given institutional capacity and resources. Officers do not necessarily have the analysis skills required, and they do not consider that they have the mandate to do analysis. As far as could be determined for this report, no crime analysts are contracted or have working partnerships with the RBPF, although the RBPF expressed interest in building such capacity. Institutional commitment to integrating crime analysis into the police force can be extremely beneficial for crafting effective responses to crime. Some of the evidence-based policing and public safety practices that the Ministry of National Security and RBPF are attempting to implement (such as Operation Ceasefire, hot spot policing, and problem-oriented policing) have shown positive results internationally but have also been shown to require intensive crime analysis to drive responses and strategies (Santos, 2014). Without a strong analysis component, it is not clear that any of these evidence-based policies can be successful.

Finally, analysis of data should be the driving force of policy design and interventions. While most of the public agencies interviewed for this study stated that they produce annual reports with annual statistics, it is not clear how or if this information is then used to craft new strategies directed toward crime and violence. Regarding the evaluation of current programmes and interventions, while in a few instances information on programme outputs was provided to the author, no information could be provided on programme outcomes or impact (or lack thereof).



Without constant monitoring and evaluation, it is impossible to determine what programmes are working or what adjustments need to be made. Given that financial and human resources are not unlimited, it is then difficult to determine the most effective allocation of resources.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS**

### **The Problem**

The evidence presented in this report suggests that crime and violence continue to be a significant concern in The Bahamas. Records from the Royal Bahamas Police Force as well as public health sources confirm high levels of criminality in the country. These figures show that already high levels of crime and violence have consistently risen during the past decade. Crime data disaggregated by type clearly show continuous increases in the most violent crimes: murder, armed robbery, and rape. The murder rate has more than doubled in the last 10 years and is now among the highest in the Caribbean region.<sup>96</sup> While the RBPf reported a drop in the number of armed robberies from 2012 to 2013, they have increased 54 per cent in the last decade.

The main victims of homicide are between 18 to 25 years old, although the age category of 26-35 is not far behind.<sup>97</sup> Victims were primarily males killed with a firearm, and the killings were mostly motivated by unresolved personal conflicts, domestic violence, retaliation, and robbery.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, statistics provided by the Ministry of National Security show that in 2013, 54 per cent of the prison population (sentenced and on remand) were between the ages of 14 and 30. While there is a lack of official police data on gang-related crime in The Bahamas, the emergence of small gangs and their participation in crime is becoming an increasing concern. Many suburban communities are now experiencing increased gang-related crimes and violence, and gangs based in New Providence are thought to be seeking connections with foreign criminal organizations to obtain more direct access to foreign sources of illicit drugs.<sup>99</sup> More data and intelligence on gangs are clearly needed, particularly if initiatives such as Operation Ceasefire and others are to have any impact.

While the primary victims of homicide are men, violence against women and children is also a concern. Both domestic violence and rape disproportionately affect women and are highly underreported. In 2013, domestic violence was responsible for 14 per cent of homicides, and 13 per cent of all homicide victims were female. Non-fatal domestic violence was responsible for an average of 28 per cent of all assaults reported to the police between 2010 and 2013. The average rate of rapes reported over 2009–2013 was 27 per 100,000 population, which is above the already high Caribbean regional average. Emergency room data show that this number is far under-representative of the number of actual cases taking place, yet proportionally far fewer resources and policy initiatives have been dedicated to reducing rape than other types of crime.

### **Research, Data, and Evaluation**

Although there is a sense of urgency to implement new violence prevention programmes and strategies, investment in research and capacity-building for data collection and analysis on crime and violence should not be underemphasized. In other words, the urgency should not

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<sup>96</sup> Unpublished data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Research and Planning Unit.

<sup>97</sup> Author's analysis of data provided by the Royal Bahamas Police Force Research and Planning Unit.

<sup>98</sup> Unpublished data from the Royal Bahamas Police Force Research and Planning Unit.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

eclipse the need for continual support for further research and understanding of the phenomenon in the Bahamian context. A rigorous research agenda could be established to continue to explore some of the issues touched on in this report and the few other studies conducted on the topic in The Bahamas. It is important that there be support for and financial investment in basic research, including by establishing partnerships with academic institutions such as the College of The Bahamas and other regional and international academics and practitioners. This research could include aspects of street gangs and organized crime (connections between the two, types, their impact on street crime and violence, gang surveillance systems, etc.), as well as other forms of violence that disproportionately affect women and children (domestic violence, rape, child abuse, etc.) and the impact of social structural factors (community, family, school, peers and individuals) on both.

Support for additional research notwithstanding, a full understanding of the causes of violence in The Bahamas may not be achieved in the very near future, and, given the levels of violence; the country cannot afford to wait around before crafting policy solutions. Even in other international contexts where correlations have been identified, causal relationships are still less understood. However, it is not necessary to have a complete understanding of all the causes to achieve significant reductions in crime and violence. Around the world, the best-known approaches to learning about what works to reduce violence have involved a cycle of (1) diagnosing specific violence or crime problems, (2) designing preventative or suppressive interventions, (3) evaluating the interventions, (4) refining the interventions, and (5) replicating the evaluation. It has been suggested by criminologists such as Lawrence Sherman (2014), among others, that the continued testing and evaluation of policing and preventative programmes can lead to equally valuable information about crime and violence.

However, in order for both an expanded research agenda to take root and continued testing and evaluation of interventions to become possible, there must be a shift in the current approach in The Bahamas to the collection, use, and sharing of data. This report documented many recent signs that data collection, tracking, and evaluation are increasingly recognized by Bahamian authorities and NGOs as an important component of fighting crime and violence. This is evident in the new inclusion of performance measures in the RBPF's annual Commissioner's Policing Plan, the inclusion of a section on monitoring and evaluation in the National Anti-Drug Strategy, and the efforts of the Office of the Attorney General to begin to measure progress in providing the accused with a speedy trial. Many NGO practitioners noted the increasing awareness of the importance of data collection and evaluation to improve their activities and funding perspectives.

As mentioned extensively throughout this report, significant barriers remain around data collection, sharing, analysis, and evaluation. Much of the information requested for this report was not provided even after extensive requests at the highest levels of the Ministry of National Security. The data could not always be disaggregated by variables such as age and gender, were not always comparable across districts (i.e., violence in schools), and were placed in overlapping categories that could result in double counting, among a range of other issues. NGOs and academics interviewed lamented the difficulties they faced getting access to data from public sources on crime and violence, and many stakeholders commented on the feeling of "working in silos." Data sharing even among government entities is not common practice. For example, police placed at schools keep their own records on violent incidents and crimes that are separate from the schools' records and not readily available to the schools themselves. This is just one example of a number of similar situations identified.

In many countries crime observatories have been established to collect and share data on crime and violence in a standardized way. These data can then be used to make evidence-based

policy recommendations. Such an initiative in The Bahamas could be useful for crime mapping and analysis, as well as to provide monitoring and evaluation support for promising practices and policies.

## **Legislation and Policy**

Some important advances have been made in terms of legislation to improve the accountability of the police and update definitions, penalties, and support mechanisms for physical and sexual abuse of women and children. While these laws have legally codified types of violence that have not always been considered crimes and created new mechanisms such as protection orders, their impact still has yet to be measured. It is important to continue to monitor their implementation and identify the gaps, as well as pinpoint barriers that impede marginalized groups from accessing the rights these laws provide.

The main policy framework for the current administration regarding crime and violence is outlined in Project Safe Bahamas. Although that framework incorporates some evidence-based initiatives, such as Operation Ceasefire and hot spot policing, it is unclear how local data and analysis processes are being used in the programmes and interventions the framework outlines. Other endeavours such as the Swift Justice Initiative seem to show promise in terms of adopting court scheduling strategies that minimize delays and backlogs and reducing poor case preparation by criminal justice practitioners. However, much of what is outlined in the Project Safe Bahamas framework has yet to be put into practice.

## **Programmes, Projects, and Interventions**

The presentation of programmes, projects, and interventions in this report is meant to be a starting point for assessing and documenting promising crime prevention and control practices. It is worth noting that while government programmes targeting violence and crime still fall predominantly under the category of suppression, Urban Renewal Centres and some aspects of Operation Ceasefire fall into the categories of situational and secondary prevention. This may signify a growing recognition of the importance of prevention. Most primary and secondary prevention programmes are run by the Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Education, and NGOs. There is a clear gap in the area of tertiary prevention. The only existing public programme focusing on tertiary prevention is limited to youth. One NGO, the National L.E.A.D. Institute, is beginning to provide targeted, albeit limited, tertiary prevention services. Other NGOs provide some support (including spiritual counselling and housing) to former inmates, but do not always have programmes tailored to their specific needs as ex-offenders. In many cases these NGOs serve a large range of beneficiaries, including the poor and homeless, and do not specifically target ex-offenders.

The generic category of “at-risk-youth” is loosely defined in many prevention programmes, which may consider beneficiaries to be at risk if they are merely suspended from school, poor, or parentless. No programmes identified could provide a definition of “at-risk” or used special risk assessment tools to determine target beneficiaries. There is clearly a need to distinguish targeted violence prevention programmes from other social programmes. While social welfare and vocational programmes are necessary and may affect some of the risk factors associated with crime and violence, they are not necessarily violence prevention programmes. While these social programmes are valid in their own right, their objectives are different and they should be implemented in addition to, not instead of, targeted violence prevention.

Most of programmes identified in this study have been in place for less than two years, or have undergone major changes in the past five years. In some cases this was due to a change in government administrations (e.g., Urban Renewal 2.0) or, in the case of many NGOs, to changes in funding availability. The lack of long-running programmes makes assessment of results difficult and demonstrates the absence of long-term sustainable prevention initiatives in The Bahamas. It is important to address the problem of programme sustainability and to discover ways (perhaps through legislation, long-term earmarked funding, and public pressure) to insulate violence and crime prevention programmes from politics, elections, and lack of long-term funding.

Furthermore, given the limited information provided on the implementation, cost, and results of the programmes reviewed, it is difficult to estimate which practices are promising. Although some programme models that have been successful in other countries have been adopted (such as Operation Ceasefire and hot spot policing), no formative evaluations have been conducted on their implementation in The Bahamas. Thus it is impossible to determine the extent to which they are aligned with the original programme model. While local adaptations are important, if what is being implemented in The Bahamas as Operation Ceasefire is significantly different from the evidence-based model, it may not produce similar results.

### **Final Comments**

The design and implementation of effective policies rests on the capacity to conduct policy-relevant research and rigorously evaluate existing policies, programmes, and projects. This will require The Bahamas to embrace a culture of transparency and data-driven initiatives in order to tackle the persistent problems of crime and violence.

In order for this to happen, The Bahamas must politically, administratively, and financially prioritize evidence-based programmes and their evaluation. However, these types of programmes and evaluations can only be realized if there is increased budgetary support for them. Significant resources are required for adequate collection of data, monitoring, and evaluation of these programmes. Policy makers may be hesitant to release crime data or make programme evaluations public for fear of public criticism. In spite of budgetary constraints, shifting priorities and investing in data-driven solutions is needed to understand and effectively stop the spiral of crime and violence.

## **Annexes**

### **Annex 1. Methodology for Identifying and Selecting Relevant Non-Governmental Organizations**

#### **Identification of Relevant NGOs**

- Potential candidates were identified initially through the Internet. Search terms used included violence prevention, crime prevention, aggression management/reduction, conflict/dispute resolution, peace promotion, mediation, restorative justice, re-entry, recidivism prevention, and child maltreatment/abuse/neglect.
- If insufficient information was available online, organizations were contacted by phone or email to explain the project and their organization's mission in order to determine if it should be included in this report.
- Referrals of relevant NGOs were requested from the IDB Bahamas Country Office and then during interviews with each of the stakeholders (including government, academia, and other NGOs).

#### **Criteria for Including NGOs**

- They provide services to beneficiaries based on their identification as victims or perpetrators of crime/violence, or relatives of victims/perpetrators.
- The programme mission includes the following terms (or something similar): violence prevention, crime prevention, aggression management/reduction, conflict/dispute resolution, peace promotion, mediation, restorative justice, re-entry, recidivism prevention, and child maltreatment/abuse/neglect (thus including parenting programmes).
- They have been providing services for at least one continuous year.
- They serve at least 25 unique beneficiaries per year with said service.

## Annex 2. Organizations and Individuals Interviewed

Organization	Name	Date of Interview or Consultation
<b>Government</b>		
Ministry of National Security	Minister Bernard Nottage	17 February 2014
	Minister Keith Bell	17 February 2014
	Carl F. Smith, Permanent Secretary	17 February 2014
	Raymond Gibson, Consultant, Private Sector Security Services Manager	20 February 2014
	Terry Fountain, National Anti-Drug Secretariat	Contact by email and phone, 20 February 2014
	Barbara Cartwright	14 March 2014
Royal Bahamas Police Force	Ellison E Greenslade, Police Commissioner	Contact by email
	Stephen Dean, National Crime Prevention Office and Urban Renewal Commission	14 February 2014
	Superintendent Pratt, Strategic Policy & Planning Branch	14 February 2014
Department of Correctional Services - Her Majesty's Prisons	Patrick Wright, Superintendent (Acting)	Replied to information request via email
Office of the Attorney General	Cleopatra Christie	14 March 2014
Ministry of Social Services	Christine Campbell, First Assistant Secretary and Officer-in-Charge, Department/ Bureau of Women's Affairs	19 February 2014
	Mr. Gray, Acting Deputy Director of Probation and Rehabilitative Services	12 March 2014
	Betty Farquharson, Assistant Director	
	Lisa Bowels, Parenting Unit	
	Katie Gardener, Senior Probation Officer – Juveniles	11 February 2014
	Mellany Zonicle, Director Department of Social Services	
Maria Kelley, School Welfare		
	Ms. Newbold, Corrections	
	Ms. Brenda Samuels, Family Islands	
Ministry of Health	Nurse St. Albore, Coordinator of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Unit	11 March 2014
	Nurse Bell, Coordinator of the Sexual Abuse Follow-up and Evaluation (SAFE) Unit	Replied to questionnaire via email.
	Camille Deleveaux, Director the Health Information and Research Unit	20 February 2014
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Marcellus Taylor, Deputy Director	Phone interview, 24 February 2014
	Zoey Powell, Head of Guidance	14 March 2014

	Dr. Christine Curtis, Director of Refocus Centre Kim Rahming, Guidance Counsellor, Northeastern District	14 March 2014
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture	Darren Turnquest, Director of Youth	14 February 2014
Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls	Deidre Hepburn, Superintendent	Phone interview, 18 February 2014
Simpson Penn Centre for boys	Darrol Hall, Superintendent	Phone interview, 18 February 2014
Department of Statistics	Kelsie Dorsett	Phone interview, 19 February 2014
<b>Non-governmental Organizations</b>		
The Family	Dr. David Allen	12 March 2014
Bahamas Crisis Centre	Sandra Dean-Patterson, Director	19 February 2014
	Alison Hamilton, Volunteer	19 February 2014
Caribbean Male Action Network, CARIMAN	Sidney Strachan	17 February 2014
National Leadership Esteem Ability and Discipline (L.E.A.D.) Project	Troy Clarke, President	10 February 2014
Families Of All Murder Victims (FOAM)	Khandi Gibson	Phone interview, 17 February 2014
Bahamas Christian Council	Pastor Ranford Patterson	14 February 2014
Bahamas Association for Social Health (BASH)	Terry Miller	14 February 2014
Youth Against Violence	Carlos Reid	18 February 2014
Dean Granger Centre	Executive Director Eugene Palacious	18 February 2014
Great Commissions Ministries International, The Erma Miller Centre	Executive Director Minalee Hanchell	18 February 2014
Teen Challenge Bahamas	Executive Director Eric Fox	20 February 2014
Prison Fellowship	President Dr. Anthony Sands	19 February 2014
Bahamas Against Crime	Rev. C.B. Moss, Mt. Olive Baptist Church	19 February 2014
<b>Academia</b>		
College of The Bahamas, School of Social Sciences	Dr. Stephanie Hutcheson, Assistant Professor of Psychology	20 February 2014

College of The Bahamas, School of Social Sciences	Shane Brennen, Professor of Psychology and Social Work	20 February 2014
College of The Bahamas, School of Social Sciences	Marie Carroll, Assistant Professor of Psychology	20 February 2014
College of The Bahamas, School of Social Sciences	Jessica Minnis, Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Sociology Programme	20 February 2014
College of The Bahamas, School of Social Sciences	William J. Fielding, Director of Planning	20 February 2014



### Annex 3. Programme Questionnaire

#### IDB Baseline Mapping Study of Violence and Crime Prevention Programmes

#### The Bahamas Country Data

Programme Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete a separate questionnaire for each programme**

**Guidance Note:** Thank you for completing the following questionnaire. In providing your answers, please be *guided* by (but not limited to) the suggested options listed under some of the questions. You can select more than one option and if you need to add another, please use the “*Other (Specify)*” option to indicate this. ***Feel free to add information that you think might better aid in understanding the programme.***

The Government of The Bahamas has given the Inter-American Development Bank permission to collect this information. The Inter-American Development Bank will schedule an appointment for the study consultant to meet with you during the ***weeks of February 10-21, 2014.*** The consultant will collect your questionnaire at that appointment and discuss your programme(s) in more detail at the time.

	Question	Answers
1.	Name of programme	
2.	Year that programme started	
3.	Objective ( <i>Describe precisely the purpose/goal of the programme</i> )	
4.	Implementing agency ( <i>Indicate which ministry/agency/ organization is directly responsible for the programme</i> )	
5.	Type of programme or intervention (indicate a corresponding number below and briefly explain) <b>1. Community Mobilization around Crime and Violence:</b> <i>Involvement of local citizens, including youth, community groups, churches, agencies, former gang members and coordination of programmes and staff functions within and across agencies.</i> <b>2. Primary Social Prevention:</b> <i>Aggression reduction, conflict resolution, peace promotion <u>targeted at entire communities in high-risk neighbourhoods</u></i>	

	Question	Answers
	<p><b>3. Situational Prevention:</b> Reducing opportunities for crime to occur through rehabilitation of public spaces and the use of new technologies (i.e., cameras, environmental design, etc.)</p> <p><b>4. Secondary Social Prevention:</b> Targets children, youth, women or families <u>specifically identified as at-risk</u> and intervenes before early behaviours turn into serious delinquency and/or gang involvement.</p> <p><b>5. Intervention:</b> Targeted at <u>children, youth or families who have been identified as already being involved in harmful, violent or criminal activities</u> and using aggressive outreach combined with appropriate support services.</p> <p><b>6. Support Services:</b> Providing support services to women, children, or men who are victims of violence or crime and/or their families.</p> <p><b>7. Suppression:</b> Identifying, targeting, arresting, and trying perpetrators of violence and crime</p> <p><b>8. Re-entry:</b> Targeted at offenders who are re-entering the community after confinement, providing counselling and social services and monitoring reintegration into the community.</p> <p><b>9. Other</b> (specify)</p>	
6.	<p>Target Group/s (Who/what is the programme aimed at)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At-risk youth</li> <li>2. Youth in conflict with the law</li> <li>3. Gang members</li> <li>4. Former gang members</li> <li>5. Abused women</li> <li>6. Abused/neglected children</li> <li>7. Victims of violence</li> <li>8. Family of victims</li> </ol>	

	Question	Answers
	9. <i>Elderly victims of violence</i> 10. <i>Families of perpetrators</i> 11. <i>Criminal offenders</i> 12. <i>Ex-offenders</i> 13. <i>Other (specify)</i>	
7.	Targeting mechanism ( <i>What is the method of selection of participants for the programme?</i> )	
8.	Number served for 2012 and 2013 a. <i>Please specify whether this is individuals, households, projects, communities, or other</i> b. <i>Please specify whether this is for the fiscal year or the calendar year</i>	
9.	Activities realized, or benefit(s) and service(s) provided in the last 1-3 years.	
10.	Duration ( <i>How long has the programme been going on?</i> ) 1. <i>Less than 6 months</i> 2. <i>Six months - Under 1 year</i> 3. <i>1-2 years</i> 4. <i>3-4 years</i> 5. <i>5 or more years</i> 6. <i>No time limit</i> 7. <i>Other (Specify)</i>	
11.	Current state of programme implementation (what has already been done?)	
12.	Average length that a client receives services 1. <i>Less than 6 months</i> 2. <i>Six months - under 1 year</i> 3. <i>1-2 years</i> 4. <i>3-4 years</i> 5. <i>5 or more years</i> 6. <i>No time limit</i> 7. <i>Other (Specify)</i>	
	<b>Programme Expenditure</b>	
13.	Sources of funding ( <i>Where does the financing for the programme come from? Do you have the same funding source from year to year?</i> )	
14.	Expenditure for 2012/2013 ( <i>Total</i> )	

	Question	Answers
	<i>spending on the programme in 2012/2013; spending on each activity related to violence prevention) and estimated expenditure for 2014</i>	
	<b>Management Information System</b>	
15.	Method of information capture ( <i>By what method do you collect and store information on the programme</i> ) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Manual/Paper-based</i></li> <li>2. <i>Computer-based (Word/Excel, etc.)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Electronic MIS</i></li> </ol>	
16.	Is the MIS linked to any other database? If so, which ones?	
	<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	
17.	Date and type of last, or planned future evaluation ( <i>This can be the impact or other evaluation to assess the programme's impact, effectiveness toward achieving its objectives, and the key performance targets</i> )	
18.	Evaluation conducted by? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Internal unit</i></li> <li>2. <i>Auditor General</i></li> <li>3. <i>External firm</i></li> <li>4. <i>None</i></li> </ol>	
19.	Frequency of evaluations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>None</i></li> <li>2. <i>Semi-annually</i></li> <li>3. <i>Annually</i></li> <li>4. <i>Every 2-5 years</i></li> <li>5. <i>Less than every 5 years</i></li> </ol>	
20.	Is there a programme hotline (toll-free telephone call line)? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Yes</i></li> <li>2. <i>No</i></li> </ol>	
21.	Is the programme guided by legislation? ( <i>If so, name and date of ratification/last amendment</i> )	
22.	Any other comments on the	

	Question	Answers
	programme you wish to share	
23.	<p>Where possible, please have copies of any or all of the following for collection at the time of your interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Most recent Annual Report</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Evaluation Reports</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Process Evaluations</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Guiding legislation for programme</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Other</i></li> </ul>	

**Name of Person(s) Completing Questionnaire:**

**Position:**

**Contact Information:**

- **Email:**
- **Telephone (Mobile):**
- **Telephone (Office, include extension):**

**Date:**

**Thank you!**

#### **Annex 4. Definitions of Murder Motives (Royal Bahamas Police Force)**

**1. DOMESTIC A**

Killing as a result of altercations concerning and arising out of family affairs and other household issues, but not including significant others.

**2. DOMESTIC B**

Killing as a result of arguments, disputes and altercations concerning issues of intimate relationships (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, "sweet-hearting," etc.)

**3. ROBBERY**

Killing during any stage of a robbery or an attempted robbery.

**4. SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Killing during any stage of a rape, attempted rape, or as a result of other sexually motivated violent situations.

**5. CONFLICT**

Killing resulting from verbal and/or physical disputes and altercations between individuals, not fitting in any of the Domestic categories.

**6. DRUGS/DRUG-RELATED**

Killing as a result of the sale, distribution, trafficking or business of drugs.

**7. REVENGE/RETALIATION**

Killing in response or reaction to prior confrontations, altercations, crimes or other issues.

**8. UNKNOWN/UNDETERMINED**

Insufficient factual information to safely support and assign a specific categorization.

## Annex 5. National Reported Crimes, 2000–2013

Violent Crimes (Against the Person)														
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Murder	74	43	52	50	44	52	61	78	73	86	94	127	111	119
Death by legal intervention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manslaughter	2	1	1	3	2	2	1	4	3	2	3	1	1	4
Attempted murder	12	10	9	0	0	0	0	7	6	5	11	12	21	11
Assault										3636	3746	3269	3134	2973
Rape	101	111	140	114	89	82	72	134	118	109	78	107	92	105
Attempted Rape	27	65	36	36	31	23	23	35	43	33	26	28	11	22
Other Sexual Offences	36	58	204	208	211	178	250	239	200	253	221	219	221	190
Unlawful Sex	195	182	184	166	196	189	208	240	241	251	203	178	151	165
Armed Robbery	782	532	765	763	663	782	548	817	793	882	924	998	1106	1022
Robbery	219	206	207	258	199	198	188	194	262	316	335	369	367	365
Attempted Robbery	20	8	27	20	18	28	12	19	35	26	31	43	33	30
Kidnapping/abduction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	18	26	28	29
Property Crimes (Against the property)														
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Burglary	139	225	234	292	187	234	235	336	450	405	380	340	310	275
Housebreaking	2434	1803	2137	2581	2019	2255	2628	2510	2727	2668	3141	3242	2891	2265
Shopbreaking	1379	999	1489	1362	1478	1318	1377	1504	1586	1362	1192	942	976	912
Stealing	3171	2398	3640	4042	3880	1450	1281	1307	1542	1572	1972	1940	1985	1906
Stealing from Vehicle	1133	1291	1589	1779	1702	698	599	769	1078	1176	1688	2490	2299	2443
Vehicle theft	536	614	709	671	731	846	1059	1171	1359	1088	1242	1330	1348	1157
Malicious Damage	2720	2701	3050	3101	3018	2808	2736	2748	2949	3198	3041	2942	2749	2580
Receiving	4	4	2	12	2	4	2	5	8	9	5	6	10	17
Arson	47	60	66	44	44	36	28	47	39	42	38	20	42	43
Unlawful Possession										150	157	161	127	136
Arson										42	38	20	42	42
Malicious Damage										3196	3040	2939	2739	2578
Fraud Related Matters										386	549	637	449	440
Other Crimes														
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Possession of illegal firearm										312	351	538	478	438
Possession of illegal ammunition										4388	6224	11872	6516	6853

## Annex 6. Ministry of Education 10-Year Plan, Goal 17 Objectives

### **10-Year Education Plan**

### **Goal 17: *Reducing School Violence and Creating Safe Learning Environments***

#### **SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES**

**Objective 1:** Improve security on school campuses by engaging adequate numbers of security officers who are properly trained and fit for service

**Objective 2:** Establish a programme of continuous training for school security personnel

**Objective 3:** Ensure that all teachers receive basic training in effective classroom management techniques, including non-violent approaches to student discipline and conflict resolution

**Objective 4:** Ensure that teachers are equipped to utilise varied teaching styles to engage students with various modalities of learning

**Objective 5:** Integrate character development activities at all levels

**Objective 6:** Increase the number of metal detectors used by school security personnel

**Objective 7:** Ensure the dissemination and implementation of the revised Safe Schools Manual

**Objective 8:** Ensure that all students, teachers, parents and education stakeholders are familiar with and adhere to rules and regulations outlined in the Safe Schools Manual

**Objective 9:** Ensure measures are put in place to hold parents accountable for the actions of their children

**Objective 10:** Further develop alternative educational and training programmes for at-risk students

**Objective 11:** Encourage extra-curricular activities such as martial arts, boxing, gardens and clean environments and creative expression programmes, to release pent-up emotions

**Objective 12:** Ensure adequate number of school-based counsellors are available

#### **LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES**

**Objective 16:** Install closed circuit TV systems in all New Providence and Grand Bahama schools

**Objective 17:** Ensure that students are taught conflict resolution strategies at all levels

**Objective 18:** Ensure that school enrolments are kept within the prescribed limits, thereby eliminating conditions which promote violent behaviour

**Objective 19:** Reduce overcrowding in schools by improving the design of schools



## Annex 7. Programmes, Projects, and Interventions

### I. Primary Prevention

#### a. Situational and Community

##### *Urban Renewal 2.0*

**Background:** Urban Renewal 2.0 is the flagship crime prevention programme of the current administration and personal priority of the prime minister. A pilot in 2002 began with a police team that visited homes and businesses in the neighbourhood of Farm Road collecting information on concerns related to crime, housing, and environmental problems. Police teamed up with representatives from other governmental agencies, including the Department of Social Services, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Public Works, to address the concerns. Actions included removing abandoned vehicles, addressing issues of abandoned buildings, and arresting identified criminal offenders. According to the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF), these efforts led to a reduction in crime in this area, although no evaluation or crime data has been provided to support the claim.

Between 2002 and 2007, nine Urban Renewal Centres served as hubs for integrated services provided through multiple governmental agencies to high-needs communities. In 2007, when a new prime minister was elected from the FNM party, the programme was revised to exclude the participation of the police force. When Prime Minister Perry G. Christie was elected again in 2012, the programme was newly revised – redubbed Urban Renewal 2.0 – and the community policing component was re-incorporated.

**Objectives:** Urban Renewal 2.0 was designed to cut down on bureaucracy and bring integrated government services directly to high-need areas. It is designed to be a multi-faceted approach to crime prevention through community policing and by improving the quality of life in these communities. Each Urban Renewal Centre should be a hub for service provision by RBPF community police officers, as well as staff from social services, environmental health, housing, and health entities. The objectives of the programme are to:

- 1) Prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in the community.
- 2) Identify and tackle the main causes of social conditions that promote the occurrence of crime and deviant behaviour.
- 3) Examine and improve the quality of life and the social and environmental conditions of high-crime communities.
- 4) Involve the community in problem-solving and empower citizens to play an active role in their communities
- 5) Identify the problems facing young people and engage them in positive activities and programmes geared toward making them productive citizens.

A range of activities are designed to be held at centres, including after-school programmes, summer youth camps, drug and crime prevention programmes, community clean-ups, youth bands, small home repairs, environmental health assistance, job fairs, and other events. Community police officers are directed to perform 17 different activities, including law enforcement, directed patrols in problem areas, prioritizing problems, reporting information to the RBPF on the specifics of the community, organizing activities, conflict resolution, referrals, outreach, recruiting and supervising volunteers, reducing disorder, networking, and getting to know the community.

**Beneficiaries:** Residents of nine districts in New Providence, seven in Grand Bahama, and one in Abaco. Districts are said to have been chosen due to their high crime rates.

**Implementation:** The programme is overseen by the Deputy Minister of Works and Urban Development. In May 2012, the police returned to Urban Renewal Centres and two co-chairs were appointed to head the Urban Renewal Commission. Eight members of the commission were said to be selected by civil society. Two RBPF coordinators are in charge of overseeing community police officers at the centres – Superintendent Dean and Superintendent Bo. According to the RBPF, each centre is headed by one appointed police inspector who oversees the daily activities of all staff at the centre.

Generally, centres were said to have five community police officers (including the head inspector) and one social worker. Other staff – including a nurse, an environmental health inspector, and a housing specialist – may be stationed at one centre or rotate between two or three different centres.

Each centre makes its own plan of activities and submits an annual report. Activities vary from one centre to another, but some standard activities offered at all centres include:

- Boys and girls club (afterschool activities)
- Youth musical band
- Programmes for youth suspended from school
- Computer classes (for youth, seniors, and adults)

Police officers mentioned that they report information about Urban Renewal communities to detectives and other specialized policing units. They felt they were able to move within the communities and talk to residents in ways that regular officers could not. Some officers reported spending most of their time helping unemployed community members search for work.

In January 2014, Urban Renewal Officers began conducting the Bahamas Crime and Social & Economic Conditions Community Survey. In the first phase, the survey was conducted in three communities: Bain & Grants Town, Centreville, and Englerston. In the second phase the Ministry of National Security intends to expand the survey to other Urban Renewal communities. The initial three areas were chosen based on high population density, poor living conditions, and high numbers of murders according to crime statistics for 2013.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first has questions relating to social and economic conditions, and the second addresses perceived levels and types of crime in the communities. The intention is for every household in these constituencies to be surveyed. The survey was implemented by Urban Renewal Offices and individuals from the communities who were given training by Urban Renewal and a stipend.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is funded through the approved budget for the Ministry of Public Works. Specific details regarding the number of programme staff and budget were requested by the author but never made available. Interviewees suggested that centres did not have individual budgets, but could request small amounts for certain activities. Some stakeholders mentioned that funding was scarce and often activities were paid for by donations or “out of officers’ own pockets.”

**Evaluation/Results:** According to interviewees, each Urban Renewal Centre submits an annual report that is then used by the coordinators, who submit an overall report at the end of the year.<sup>100</sup> Information on how performance and impact are evaluated was not provided. According to those interviewed from the Urban Renewal Programme, crime has been reduced in Urban Renewal communities; however, no crime data were provided to verify this claim.

### ***Bahamas Against Crime***

**Background:** Bahamas Against Crime is a non-profit organization developed by the Council for Social Economic Development, the Bahamas Christian Council, and Civil Society Bahamas. In October 2005, stakeholders from government, business, civic and cultural organizations, and religious communities came together to assess the problem and degree of information they had about rising crime. After examining the information they determined that the area where they could make the most difference was in raising awareness and mobilizing civil society. Their vision is that “crime and violence in the Bahamas will be significantly reduced when each resident acknowledges his/her contribution in some way to the current state of affairs and recognizes that each individual can indeed make a difference and that collectively we will not fail” (Bahamas Against Crime, 2008, p. 4). They believed that the first step was an attitude change from society acknowledging that there is a crisis and that they need to be involved in the solution. In August 2007, the group created an organizational structure and formally launched the initiative.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) To effect a mind-set change in residents as it relates to crime and violence
- 2) To assemble residents on every major island to link hands in a unified stance against crime and violence
- 3) To raise \$1,000,000 to be used by the relevant stakeholder groups in the fight against crime and violence

**Beneficiaries:** All of civil society.

**Implementation:** Bahamas Against Crime is managed by a Board of Directors, supported by a large number of committees in New Providence and the Family Islands. The group has produced a number of events, awareness-raising activities, rallies, and marches to sensitize the public and put pressure on the government. It has also worked to go into crime “hot spots” and provide healing services and community-building activities in those areas where individuals have been murdered. According to interviewees, Bahamas Against Crime has established a rapport with ex-offenders and gang members and in communities with high levels of crime. This has allowed the group to move freely within these areas, know what is going on and if crime is about to happen, and understand community needs.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The organization is based on all-volunteer work of board members. They aim to raise money to support community-based organizations and some public initiatives, but have had limited success. The main source of funding has included corporate sponsorship, sales of anti-crime badges, t-shirts and other materials, special events, and individual donations. No information was provided on the amount of funds raised or the group’s working budget.

**Evaluation/Results:** No official evaluations have been conducted.

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<sup>100</sup> The author requested access to these reports and received no response.

### ***National Crime Prevention Office***

**Background:** The National Crime Prevention Office (NCPO) was established in February 2010 to raise public awareness and improve the quality of life by creating safer communities through education and initiatives to reduce crime opportunities. The primary role of the NCPO is to serve as the clearinghouse for crime prevention activities throughout The Bahamas.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Raise the level of public awareness and concern about crime
- 2) Encourage self-help in crime prevention
- 3) Examine, develop, and recommend crime prevention measures suitable to the public
- 4) Coordinate efforts of organizations in crime prevention

**Beneficiaries:** All Bahamians.

**Implementation:** According to interviews, the organization analyses crime information from the previous day on a daily basis. The NCPO determines when to advise the press, and if and how the public should be made aware of recent dangerous crime trends in certain neighbourhoods. It communicates activities and regular updates through print and electronic media and makes available crime prevention flyers, posters, and brochures on violence and crime prevention tips. It also organizes presentations to businesses, churches, schools, and other interested groups. Finally, the NCPO coordinates the RBPF Annual Summer Youth Programme and tours at police headquarters and stations for school students.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** Funding is provided through the overall RBPF budget (details were not provided). The office is run by five officers, and additional officers can be pulled in for specific activities or events.

**Evaluation/Results:** No information was provided on evaluation of performance or impact, or on the results of the programme.

### ***Closed Circuit Television Cameras Project***

**Background:** This initiative involves the installation of Circuit Television (CCTV), in high-crime areas, at tourist attractions, and in business districts and vulnerable areas in order to keep watch over activities in these areas at all times. The first phase was designed to install 243 cameras in New Providence to transmit live stream video to central police headquarters, thus removing opportunities for offenders to commit a crime.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) To reduce crime prevalent in The Bahamas by increased the likelihood of detecting the criminal
- 2) To help the Royal Bahamas Police Force obtain evidential information that would lead to the apprehension and prosecution of offenders
- 3) To help the police identify areas where crime has taken place so as to move resources quickly to those areas

**Beneficiaries:** Residents in New Providence.

**Implementation:** According to the Ministry of National Security, the project became operational in November 2011. The ministry website states: “Members of The Royal Bahamas Police Force are actively working with Lowe’s Security Limited, the company who was awarded the contract by the Government, and its corporate strategic partners, Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) and Bahamas Electricity Corporation, (BEC) to ensure that 243 cameras are included in Phase 1 of this initiative, are installed by June 2013.”<sup>101</sup>

However, according to the RBPF, the official status of the project in March 2014 was only partially complete and unofficially operational, with 217 cameras in operation mostly in Nassau. Presently the cameras are being monitored only during the day (9 a.m. - 5 p.m.).<sup>102</sup> At the time of this report, only 10 officers had been assigned to the project, and only three assigned to “technical duties.” Footage is saved for 90 days and any review is done upon written request made to the Closed Circuit Television Unit. A shift system (8 a.m. - 4 p.m. and 4 p.m. - 12 a.m.) was said to be scheduled to commence shortly. Officers on duty monitoring cameras reportedly listen to real-time radio communication between the Police Control Room and mobile units to help them determine which cameras to monitor more closely. Officers were also directed to monitor the cameras for any “suspected criminal activity,” which they were to then act upon to prevent crime or apprehend criminals.

When asked about what specific criteria were used to choose camera locations, an official from the RBPF stated that “the cameras were chosen based on crime statistics generated from the Police Force’s unit known as the Strategic Planning and Policy Unit. Information given to me was that areas that presented themselves as places where incidents of crimes occurred on a regular basis were selected to install cameras.”<sup>103</sup>

The RBPF reported that pending legislation was being designed and one of its key points of concern is not infringing on the rights of the individual while traversing public spaces.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The project is funded by the Ministry of National Security at a total of \$4.6 million (more than the ministry’s total estimated recurrent annual budget for 2012/2013 of \$3,658,755), according to the Ministry of Finance. Currently 10 officers work on the project.

**Evaluation/Results:** The RBPF confirmed that there have been no evaluations regarding the impact and effectiveness of the closed circuit television project as yet. The RBPF was not aware of any court cases where video footage had been used. In terms of use for police investigations from the divisional level, it was reported that there had been “numerous requests and unfortunately a small number of successes exporting footage to assist in those matters. It is a work in progress, though, and each day we get more successes.”<sup>104</sup> It should be noted that many studies have sought to evaluate the impact of surveillance cameras on crime in city centres and public spaces, with mixed results.<sup>105</sup> While some cities have experienced crime drops, in many cases crime was displaced or unchanged. Some of the lessons learned from these experiences suggest that investing in live monitoring, immediate response capacity, and training for officers were essential. Additionally, the cost of installing, maintaining, and monitoring camera systems was found to far exceed the costs of the hardware itself (La Vigne et al., 2011).

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<sup>101</sup> See the Ministry of National Security website at [www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/portal/public/nase](http://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/portal/public/nase).

<sup>102</sup> Communication with the RBPF, March 11, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Some of the findings internationally have been summarized in Anderson and McAtamney (2011) and La Vigne et al. (2011).

## **Firearms Marking and Destruction**

**Background:** As shown in this report, firearms are increasingly being used in crime and violence in The Bahamas. As part of the approach to preventing these crimes from happening, this initiative aims to reduce the amount of firearms available to criminals and mark them clearly to facilitate tracing confiscated weapons back to their source. The initiative came about as part of an agreement between the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Ministry of National Security through a project of the OAS's Department of Public Security entitled Promoting Firearms Marking in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Ministry of National Security was provided with one marking machine and hydraulic shears for firearm destruction. The OAS also provided the necessary training to officers delegated by the ministry to ensure the proper use and handling of both machines.

**Objectives:** This initiative aims to improve firearms stockpile management through the marking of weapons and destruction of surplus firearms – including weapons of the State, those seized by the State, and imported firearms – to ensure that these weapons are not diverted into the illegal market. The objectives include:

- 1) Enhancing the national efforts of The Bahamas to control the illicit supply and use of firearms in criminal activity within the country, and to help stem the illegal entry of firearms from abroad
- 2) Enabling the clear display of serial number, model, and other forms of identification, which will ensure that firearms can be properly identified and enable law enforcement authorities to trace the movement of the firearms to their point of origin

**Beneficiaries:** All residents of the Bahamas.

**Implementation:** The firearm marking machine was donated in 2011 and the firearm destruction equipment (hydraulic shears) in May 2012. The intention of the initiative is to eventually mark all firearms in possession of the State: police armoury, weapons seized by police, and weapons used at the Department of Correctional Services, Ministry of Defence, Bahamas Customs, and the Department of Immigration.

However, currently only firearms of the police armoury are being marked. There are no fixed times for destruction and marking. The officers responsible “mark and destroy firearms at times convenient for them. They are not just dedicated to the task of marking and destroying firearms.”<sup>106</sup>

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The machines and training were provided at no cost to the Ministry of National Security by the OAS and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLirec). The initiative does not have an annual budget. One administrator and six technical staff are dedicated to marking the police armoury, but not exclusively.

**Evaluation/Results:** While no official evaluation of performance or impact has been conducted, certain results were provided. Three years after receipt of the marking machine and two years after receiving the hydraulic shears:

- 476 confiscated weapons and 288 police weapons have been marked

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<sup>106</sup> Communication with the RBPF, March 20, 2014.

- A total of 930 firearms have been destroyed (Table A7.1)<sup>107</sup>

Confiscated civilian weapons that have been marked represent 32.6 per cent of the weapons seized by the RBPF since the marking machine was received (2011–2013) and less than 23 per cent of firearms seized in the last five years.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, only about 10 per cent of the RBPF firearms have been marked to date,<sup>109</sup> and no information was provided regarding the stockpiles of the other law enforcement entities mentioned. Considering that 21,000 firearms were reported to be registered to civilians as of March 2014, it can be estimated that less than 3 per cent of legal weapons have been marked.<sup>110</sup>

Firearm destruction has had better results: 930 firearms that were confiscated have been destroyed by hydraulic shears since the machine was received (see Table A7.1). This represents more than 100 per cent of the weapons seized since the shears were received, meaning that the stockpile of weapons confiscated from previous years may also be beginning to be destroyed. However, this total is still under 44 per cent of total firearms confiscated over the last five years.

**Table A7.1: Date and Type of Firearms Destroyed by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2012–2013**

Date	Revolvers	Pistols	Shotguns	Rifles	Total
14 May 2012	17	8	9	8	42
8 August 2012		7	11	1	22
18 October 2012	0	19	24	6	49
19 October 2012	0	0	130	0	130
14 November 2012	49	161	1	4	215
15 November 2012	15	102	84	28	229
22 February 2013	4	4	66	36	110
3 October 2013	7	25	4	10	46
16 October 2013	1	2	12	4	19
20 January 2014	2	10	32	24	68
Total	98	338	373	121	930

Source: Royal Bahamas Police Force.

**Table A7.2: Firearms Seized by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2009–2013**

Years	Total Number of Firearms Seized	Total Amount of Ammunition Seized
2009	312	4,388
2010	351	6,224
2011	538	11,872
2012	480	6,521

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> According to the RBPF Strategic Policy and Planning Unit, 1,456 firearms were confiscated by the police between 2011 and 2013, while 2,119 have been seized since 2009 (Table A7.2).

<sup>109</sup> According to the RBPF, there are 2,748 firearms in its registry (communication with RBPF, March 20, 2014).

<sup>110</sup> Communication with the RBPF on 20 March 2014 confirmed that there are 21,000 civilian firearms registered and 2,748 RBPF firearms registered. The numbers registered to the Ministry of Defence, Customs, Prisons and Immigration were not provided. Of these, 764 have been marked.

2013	438	6,853
Total	2,119	35,858

Source: Royal Bahamas Police Force.

When questioned about what obstacles may be impeding greater progress in marking and destruction of firearms, interviewees commented that the main obstacle was lack of capacity. This was said to be due to a combination of lack of trained manpower and the limitations of having only one of each machine. Interviewees said that one machine was not enough to mark all firearms in the police armoury, let alone all the firearms in the country.

## **b. Individual Behaviour**

### ***National Parenting Programme***

**Background:** The lack of good parenting skills combined with teen pregnancies and the dissolution of traditional families are considered by many Bahamians to be contributing factors to the problems of crime and violence. This programme was established in 1994 and is implemented by the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development, Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services. The National Parenting Programme is offered free of charge to parents who are having difficulties or want to improve their parenting skills.

**Objectives:** The purpose of the programme is to prepare and train parents for their parenting role and responsibilities, which will assist with building stronger families and a better, healthier community.

**Beneficiaries:** While the programme is open and free of charge for any parent, the participating parents for the most part have children receiving counselling from the Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services or who are detained at the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls, the Simpson Penn Centre for boys, or are in Child Protective Services. The course is court-mandated for parents with children at either of the detention centres.

Beneficiaries are referred by:

- Courts via the Family Services Division and Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services
- Social Services/Child Protection Unit
- Government schools
- Self-referral
- NGOs, including those working with troubled youth such as the National L.E.A.D Institute and programmes for suspended youth

**Implementation:** According to the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development, the course lasts 12 weeks with two-hour sessions once a week. Nine groups run simultaneously. The curriculum focuses on a range of issues from forgiveness to communication skills and better control of household finance. After finishing the course, parents can continue to participate in a parenting support group held once a month for six months. In addition, individual and couples counselling are also offered for parents to help work through specific individual or relationship issues.

In 2012, 253 individuals participated in the course. In 2013, the number more than tripled to 930.



**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is funded by the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development. According to the Ministry of Finance's Estimates of Expenditure on Revenue Account 2013/2014, the programme is estimated to have received \$30,000 in 2012/2013.

**Evaluation/Results:** According to the ministry, the programme is evaluated annually by an internal evaluation unit. No further information on evaluations or results of the programme was provided.

### ***Youth Against Violence and the Hope Centre Mentoring Programme***

**Background:** The organization Youth Against Violence and the Hope Centre were founded in 1995 by Carlos Reid, a former gang member in The Bahamas. After leaving the gang, Reid wanted to help other young people avoid or leave the gang lifestyle. He began organizing basketball tournaments to "bring young men together through basketball not guns." He hosted tournaments for 32 teams for 18 years. The Hope Centre serves a number of youth through after-school activities and serves as a Re-Focus Centre for suspended students (see Re-Focus Programme under the subsection in this annex on Secondary Prevention). Reid is also now involved with the Ministry of Justice's Operation Ceasefire and Citizen Security Unit, where he is working on developing a group of gang outreach workers (see Operation Ceasefire under the subsection in this annex on Suppression). The Shock Mentoring Programme began in 2013.

**Beneficiaries:** Youth in grades 5-9; 30 to 45 youth participate in each cycle.

**Implementation:** Two groups of teenagers (one male and one female) are formed each semester and work with a group of mentors (some of whom have been through the mentor programme themselves). The groups watch videos and demonstrations, do role plays, and read material on four key topics: respect for self, respect for God, respect for authority, and respect for others. They address issues such as bullying, anger management, and self-esteem.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The mentoring programme depends on a team of 8-10 mentors. No information was provided regarding the programme budget and funding sources.

**Evaluation/Results:** As a new programme, no evaluations have been performed, nor has any evaluation plan been put in place. However, the organization is interested in building capacity to evaluate its programmes.

### ***Super Me!***

**Background:** According to its founder, Corey Ashley, the Super Me! Programme has been actively supporting and interacting with the children, families, teachers, and counsellors of New Providence since 2008. It began in the mission homes assisting with conflict resolution, social interaction, and self-esteem. In 2009, the head of the Counselling Department was invited to implement the programme at Queen's College, a prestigious private school, where the programme worked with over 1,200 students in assemblies, interactive workshops, and small group sessions.

In 2010, the programme made the leap into the public school system and ultimately the primary schools. After officials took note of the programme's positive effects in reducing bullying and aggressive behaviour, the decision was taken to officially incorporate the programme in the

curriculum in all 24 New Providence public primary schools, in primary schools in Eleuthera, and in specialized programmes such as Success Ultimately Reassures Everybody (SURE) for delinquent boys (see the subsection in this annex on Secondary Prevention), Providing Access to Continued Education (PACE) for pregnant teens, and selected special education departments throughout the Ministry of Education.

According to its founder, the programme has also been implemented in several other countries but on a smaller scale than in The Bahamas. Currently there are counsellors and a therapist running the programme in Toronto. The Olive Branch charity is using the programme in support of organizations in Africa, and a modified version is being developed for Cuba and Jamaica.

### **Objectives:**

- Produce individuals who are more self-assured, positive, confident, gracious, aware, and more passionate about who they are and who they can be
- Provide an environment that invites effective social skills, personal kindness, and a generosity of spirit toward themselves and others
- Apply essential tools to resolve conflicts and challenges, supporting individuals in their power to make positive, effective choices, regardless of outside influence or the situation
- Accept our differences as a gift and embrace the power of understanding and compassion
- Develop skills of working together as a work force, a community, or family in unity
- Have individuals embody each of these goals to reach a higher level of both personal and professional achievement

**Beneficiaries:** 13,000 students in New Providence, Eleuthera, and specialized programmes through the Ministry of Education.

**Implementation:** After teacher training during the 2012–2013 school year, schools began their respective four weeks of the Super Me! “Quick Lift Programme.” Students had two 15-minute sessions per week. According to the programme report, many of the teachers repeated some of the process.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** No information was provided regarding the cost and staff requirements for the programme.

**Evaluation/Results:** Although no formal impact evaluation has been performed, the programme report said that surveys of teachers asked their perception before and after the programme.<sup>111</sup> The report suggests that many of the schools were dealing with issues of competition, bullying, and lack of respect prior to implementation of the programme. According to the report, teachers surveyed saw an overall positive change in conflict resolution, self-esteem, awareness, respect, participation, and attitude. Several positive testimonials from teachers and students are contained in the report.

### ***Champions of Change***

**Background:** The Caribbean Male Action Network (CARIMAN) carries out activities in several countries to promote gender justice, social harmony, and peaceful partnerships. The organization has received funding from UN Women to strengthen and develop the capacity of

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<sup>111</sup> Super Me! Success Report 2012–2013 (unpublished).

men's organizations to collaborate with women's organizations to meaningfully address gender-based violence, initially in Antigua, The Bahamas, Dominica, and Guyana. One of the outputs of this project is expected to be the development of social media platforms, including upgrading the existing website. The project will also support the development of teams of "Champions for Change." This project was scheduled to roll out between August 2011 and August 2012, but has struggled to get off the ground in The Bahamas.

**Objectives:** To engage Caribbean men in examining existing beliefs and norms, promoting respect for diversity, and developing new paradigms and competencies, thus creating opportunities to negotiate new relationships to achieve gender justice, social harmony, and peaceful partnerships.

**Implementation:** Despite a slow start, the program has managed to assemble a Bahamas chapter with 8-10 members who have held three workshops in conjunction with The Bahamas Crisis Centre and the Bureau of Gender Affairs. It has also given input on the Draft National Gender Equality Policy and participated in the National Task-Force on Gender-based Violence.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** Some limited funding was provided by UN Women, but no information was provided on the budget and staff necessities for the project in The Bahamas.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluation has been conducted in The Bahamas.

## II. Secondary Prevention

### a. Targeting Victims

#### *The Bahamas Crisis Centre Victim Support Services*

**Background:** The Bahamas Crisis Centre was established in 1982 by Dr. Sandra Dean Patterson. The centre began as a women's crisis centre helping victims of domestic violence. After establishing a hotline, it began to see increasing numbers of calls from men and boys and changed to incorporate them in 1992.

**Objectives:** Offer free counselling and support services to men, women, and children who are experiencing any form of abuse, family problem, relationship issue, or behavioural problem.

**Beneficiaries:** Men, women, and children who are experiencing any form of abuse, family problem, relationship issue, or behavioural problem. In 2013, 264 new patients and 1,084 continuing clients were served. Intake forms that included information on sex (993 forms) reported that nearly 84 per cent of clients were women.

**Implementation:** The Bahamas Crisis Centre provides a range of services from counselling to legal services, awareness raising, advocacy, and a 24-hour hotline. Awareness-raising includes regular talks at schools, presentations to the media, and training for different groups of professionals (police, health workers, etc.) on how to deal with victims.

The centre has a rape advocacy programme in which hospital staff call the centre when a rape case comes in. The centre sends trained volunteers to the hospitals to accompany rape victims through the entire process of medical treatment, filing a police report, and making contact with other follow-up services available (counselling, legal support etc.). The centre has a similar

programme for domestic violence in which trained volunteers accompany the victim at the police station. A few private practice lawyers also volunteer their time to provide legal services. Most legal services entail advising individuals of their rights and accompanying them to court for divorces, protection orders, and custody hearings.

The initial issues for which clients sought help and were treated in 2013 are outlined in Table A7.3.

**Table A7.3: Reasons Clients Sought Services at The Bahamas Crisis Centre, 2013**

Anger	20
Behavioural Issues	60
Domestic Violence	292
Depression	67
Child Abuse	19
Family Issues	382
Grief	42
Housing	29
Incest	55
Marital Issues	30
Personal Development	79
Rape	122
Sexual Assault	42
Stress	26
Sexual Molestation	29
Suicidal	18

Source: Unpublished data from intake forms provided by The Bahamas Crisis Centre.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The Crisis Centre is run almost entirely by volunteers and has only two paid staff – one administrator and one administrator’s assistant. Under a new agreement, the building and fixed costs are now paid for by the Ministry of National Security. According to government budget projections, the centre was estimated to receive \$30,000 in 2012/2013 from the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development. No annual budget information was provided.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluation has been produced.

***Royal Bahamas Police Force Victim Support Unit***

**Background:** The Victim Support Unit was launched at police headquarters in August 2007. The unit works for the rights of victims, witnesses, and their families. It is made up of trained individuals who are empathetic to victims and their family needs, providing free support in a confidential environment to victims of any crime.

The unit has been classified as one of the most sensitive areas of the RBPF, mainly because of the nature of crimes with which it deals, such as rape, incest, child abuse, domestic violence, and homicide.

**Objectives:** The unit aims to ensure that victims of serious crimes, especially minority and disadvantaged groups, are treated properly by the entire police force.

**Beneficiaries:** Victims of crimes, particularly concerning domestic complaints, incidents of rape, fatal traffic accidents, and homicide cases.

**Implementation:** The unit works with other NGOs (such as The Bahamas Crisis Centre) and volunteers to help respond to the individual needs of victims. It provides the following services:

- Emotional support and reassurance
- Counselling
- Advice
- Referrals
- Case updates

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** Officers are paid by the RBPF. No information was provided regarding the number of officers who serve the unit or the budget required for the programme.

**Evaluation/Results:** No information was provided regarding performance or impact evaluation of this unit.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse and Maternal and Child Health (SCAN) and Sexual Abuse Follow-up and Evaluation (SAFE) Programmes***

**Background:** Both SCAN (children 0-12 years old) and SAFE (youths age 13 and older) were developed to provide assistance to victims of child abuse, including an assessment by a trained physician and counsellor and a coordinated multi-agency approach to case management, follow-up, and home visits. The programme is administered under the Ministry of Health, Department of Public Health, Maternal and Child Health Programme and coordinates with other government agencies including the Department of Social Services, Royal Bahamas Police Force, Ministry of Education, and Office of the Attorney General. SCAN and SAFE are each made up of a team of healthcare professionals who work closely with abused (mostly sexually) children and adolescents and their families. The team provides a link between agencies that advocate for children and also offers care, support, and specific skills to help prevent future abuse of children and adolescents who may have been abused. The teams work with professionals from various agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, including hospitals, community clinics, police, schools, and social services.

**Objectives:** The aim of the programmes is to decrease the incidence and prevalence of child abuse, (sexual abuse, physical abuse, and abandonment).

**Beneficiaries:** Abused children (mostly sexually) from 0-12 (SCAN) and abused youths age 13 years and older (SAFE). In 2013, SCAN handled 150 cases.

**Implementation:** The programmes incorporate a number of activities from awareness-raising to training and health education, in addition to physical and psychological assessments and follow-up. Their activities include:

- Health education targeting primary and secondary schools, church, community, and youth groups
- Training for frontline healthcare providers working in hospitals and primary care settings, teachers and guidance counsellors, and police officers, especially new recruits
- Public education addressing re-risk factors and signs and symptoms of abuse, and mounting displays at malls and public facilities
- Collaboration with school health nurses and adolescent health providers
- Education and counselling of parents, teachers, and guidance counsellors
- Physical and psychological assessments of suspected or confirmed cases
- Direct support to healthcare providers at primary healthcare centres and hospitals
- Follow-up activities including home visits, inquiries with school guidance counsellors, and nurses for one year

SCAN has already developed a protocol for the management of children suspected of having been abused. This protocol is currently being implemented by public service providers and public hospitals and clinics in New Providence. Two nurses at each clinic are trained by SCAN. Currently, the team is working on an evaluation of the implementation of the protocol (see Evaluation and Results).

For the 150 cases handled in 2013, SCAN arranged prompt medical, psychological, and legal services for these children and their families. It also worked to co-ordinate community services geared toward helping and following up on abused children and their families.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The SCAN programme includes a core team of five staff that handles an average of 20 cases a month. Funding for the programme comes from the Ministry of Health's maternal and child health budget and general budget. The programme budget was \$22,612 in 2012 and \$28,147 in 2013.

**Evaluation/Results:** SCAN is currently conducting an audit of clinics where doctors and nurses have been trained to examine how well the protocol is being followed and the extent to which information on these cases has been correctly recorded. The audits are announced. A SCAN team member will go through the case book that is a registry of all cases seen at the clinic. The member then identifies child abuse or suspected child abuse cases. The team will go over the forms filled out to make sure each record is complete and determine how well the protocol was followed (i.e., if there is a signed police report and if the case was reported to SCAN).

The second round of audits was conducted in March 2014. No report has yet been prepared, but information from the first round of audits had been used to determine which clinics needed additional training or help.

### ***Child Protection Services Unit***

**Background:** The Child Protection Services Unit of the Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Services, has direct responsibility for providing intervention and ongoing management of cases of child maltreatment in The Bahamas. It also investigates cases involving the physical, sexual, emotional, and verbal abuse of children.

**Beneficiaries:** Physically, sexually, and emotionally abused, maltreated, and abandoned children. In 2013, the unit attended to 490 children.

**Implementation:** Cases of child abuse or suspected child abuse are reported by school counsellors, hospitals, and clinics directly to the Child Protection Services Unit. The unit is responsible for collecting all the initial information on the individual and the case. The unit then follows a protocol, depending on the status and type of the case, to ensure that the police are notified, the child receives necessary medical and psychological services, and necessary measures are taken to place the child with a relative or elsewhere if necessary.

The unit also produces monthly and annual statistics on the number of cases.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The unit includes 14 technical officers who are trained social workers and case aids.

**Evaluation/Results:** No information about impact or performance evaluations was provided.

### ***National Child Abuse Hotline***

**Background:** The National Hotline for Child Abuse was established to provide service beyond office hours to children who may be at risk of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Persons wishing to report cases of suspected child abuse can call this 24-hour hotline.

**Beneficiaries:** Abused or neglected children and those who wish to alert the authorities to cases of suspected neglect are the main beneficiaries of this service. However, it was reported that the hotline also receives calls for other types of domestic conflicts.

**Implementation:** The Child Abuse Hotline has two phone numbers, one for New Providence and one for Grand Bahamas. Calls are handled by trained social workers at a call centre. Emergency cases are sent immediately to the police and/or referred to medical services. The social workers are trained in how to address different types of situations and determine the type of intervention necessary. It was reported that in some cases social workers may go to the home, sometimes accompanied by the police. In other cases they might simply help resolve a conflict or calm the situation over the phone. Other cases are referred to the relevant agencies for further intervention (e.g., Department of Social Services). Interviewees estimated that only 3 of 10 calls normally required direct intervention. From 2011 to 2013, the centre received 761 calls. The highest numbers of calls regarded neglect (24 per cent), physical abuse (18 per cent), and sexual abuse (11 per cent).

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** No information was provided on the budget and staff of the hotline.

**Evaluation/Results:** No information was provided on any evaluation or results of the hotline.

### ***Families of All Murder Victims (FOAM)***

**Background:** FOAM is a non-profit support group for victims of homicide. The organization was founded and is run by Khandi Gipson, who struggled with the murder of her two brothers in August 2011 and April 2012. She witnessed first-hand not only the devastation of the grieving process, but also the difficulties faced by families in obtaining necessary support (social services, police, courts, etc.). Although she has been providing support to other families of murder victims since 2011, FOAM formally became an organization in June 2012.

**Objectives:** To provide mental, emotional, and tangible support to families of homicide victims.

**Beneficiaries:** All families, especially children, of murder victims. In 2013, the organization helped 150 families. In 2014, it reported working with 59 families as of March of that year.

**Implementation:** Khandi and her 15 volunteers, many of whom have lost a loved one to violence, provide support for the families of every murder victim in New Providence. Every time a murder occurs, FOAM sends a volunteer to talk to the family. The organization provides assistance and follow-up with the family for an average of one year after a killing takes place. The organization has two trained grief counsellors who help families work through the grieving process. Volunteers also provide assistance with everything from getting groceries to taking the children to the movies and helping the family access needed social services and follow-up on the judicial process. Particular attention is paid to helping families, especially children, work through their anger.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The organization is run by two paid staff and 15 volunteers.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations of the programme have been conducted.

### ***The Family: People Helping People***

**Background:** The Family: People Helping People is a community outreach programme founded by Dr. David Allen to enhance re-socialization by helping people work through their social and psychological problems in a group setting. The initiative began in 2008 as a response to perceived community fragmentation. The programme was designed based on a group therapy model with one group of about 50 adults and a smaller juvenile group of 20 individuals. Therapy sessions attempt to promote re-socialization through “spiritual awareness, empathetic connection, and installation of hope, stress reduction, anger management, revenge elimination, gratitude, forgiveness, parental education and altruism” (Allen, 2013, p. 15).

**Objectives:** To improve socialization by promoting positive emotions (gratitude and forgiveness) and addressing negative emotions (anger and vengeance) in a group therapy setting.

**Beneficiaries:** Group therapy sessions are currently open to the public in 15 marginalized Bahamian communities. Several different groups meet throughout the week, adding up to an average of 150 beneficiaries per week.

**Implementation:** Participants attend weekly sessions with a trained therapist. They are invited to share recent experiences, progress, or setbacks. According to Dr. Allen, discussion is free and open and “[e]ach session ends with a psychological/spiritual teaching, which is designed to foster education, growth and character development” (Allen, 2013, p. 16). The activities involve role playing, storytelling, psychological photography, silent meditation, community service, and spirituality.

The programme is currently undertaking further research on re-socialization and the results of the initiative, as well as developing a research instrument to measure re-socialization in The Bahamas.

According to an analysis of group sessions, some of the main issues patients deal with include suicide and depression, abuse, trauma from being a victim (or family member of a victim) of violence, addiction, violent crime, domestic violence, and grief. In an effort to identify which themes occurred most frequently, group facilitators were asked to write a review of overt and



covert themes after each of the 192 sessions in 2013. The two main themes discussed were violence (31 sessions; 16 per cent) and grief (29 sessions; 15 per cent) (Bethel and Allen, 2013).

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is run by Dr. Allen, his research assistant, and 10 trained therapists and facilitators. All programme activities are currently funded completely by the Templeton Foundation through a three-year grant. No information was provided on the annual budget.

**Evaluation/Results:** In 2012, a six-month pilot study of the programme was conducted by Meridius Health Communications of San Diego, California. According to Allen (2013), the evaluation was conducted in two phases. Participants were given a battery test at the beginning and end of each of each phase to measure baseline and change.<sup>112</sup> According to the findings, those who participated longer had significantly less depression ( $p = 0.0099$ ), were less likely to contemplate suicide ( $p = 0.013$ ), and less likely to be in an abusive relationship ( $p = 0.0001$ ) (Allen, 2013, p. 17). After joining the programme, participants were reported to show decreases in the desire for revenge ( $p = 0.0061$ ) and in loneliness ( $p = 0.0074$ ). There were no significant differences in assault, aggression, and suspicion (Allen, 2013).

## **b. Targeting Early Delinquent or Violent Behaviours**

### ***Student Refocus Support Programme***

**Background:** The Student Refocus Support Programme began in September 2012 as a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the North Eastern Pastor's Alliance. The programme started as an initiative to provide more standardized services in five original Student Refocus Centres in the Northeastern district of New Providence, with concentration on the successful reintegration of suspended students into academic, spiritual, and social communities. In 2013, the Refocus Programme expanded to 10 other existing suspension centres and began working with troubled youth before they get suspended, including in primary schools. By the spring of 2014, there were 14 suspension centres operating under the programme.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Ensure that the education of suspended students continues
- 2) Develop and implement educational strategies that will help students with academics and behaviour
- 3) Manage and monitor 14 suspension centres that accommodate public schools
- 4) Ensure consistency among centres with policy and procedures of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- 5) Ensure that suspended students are mainstreamed upon completion of their suspension
- 6) Reduce the number of suspensions and repeat suspensions

**Beneficiaries:** Primary, junior, and secondary children with behaviour problems in school. The suspension programme in 2013 (January-December) served 699 students (56 per cent male and 44 per cent female) in grades 7-12.

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<sup>112</sup> According to Allen (2013), the test included measures of well-being including the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item form (GQ-6), Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWB)12, Hope Scale 7, Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)4, Internalized Shame Scale (ISS)8, Buss-Durkee Hostility-Guilt Inventory3, Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory 18 Item Version (TRIM-18), and Beck Depression Inventory2. Results were analysed for significance using a two-tailed t-test. Participants were also grouped by how much time they had spent in the programme and were analysed using an ANOVA test.

The main reasons for suspensions in 2013 were fights and disrespectful behaviour. Fights were the reason for 52 per cent of suspensions in the first semester and 43 per cent in the second semester. Disrespectful behaviour motivated 20 per cent of suspensions in the first semester and 45 per cent in the second semester. Other causes representing a small percentage of suspensions included drug possession, weapons possession, and profanity.

**Implementation:** Prevention activities include the creation of boys and girls empowerment groups. These groups are chosen by the teachers and guidance counsellors to participate in special activities at school that are facilitated by reputable people in the community. Suspension from school is only possible in junior and secondary schools. Once a young person is suspended (for two weeks or less), he or she is sent to one of the Refocus Centres (in grades 7-12). These include three Urban Renewal Centres and other NGOs such as the Hope Centre, Teen Challenge, and the National L.E.A.D Institute. Suspended students are referred to the programme by the school guidance counsellor. They are supposed to be accompanied by the parents for their first entry into the centre. A referral form comes with each student, so the centre knows what the situation is that has led to the student's placement. The school is directed to send assignments with the children so they can do supervised school work, and receive assistance at the Refocus Centre. Children also work in individual and group counselling (with other students and parents) on substance abuse, anger management, conflict resolution, social skills, and self-esteem.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. No information was provided regarding the number of staff or annual budget of the project.

**Evaluation/Results:** An evaluation of student behaviour after attending a Refocus Centre was conducted for 172 students who participated between January and December 2013 (40 per cent of beneficiaries that semester). According to the evaluation by school guidance counsellors, 26 per cent showed no improvement, 50 per cent a slight improvement, and 37 per cent significant improvement.

### ***Success Ultimately Reassures Everyone (SURE) Programme***

**Background:** SURE was established in 1992 in Nassau and in 1993 in Freeport, Grand Bahama to offer education to students who are expelled from school for disruptive behaviour. SURE focuses on male students with chronic disciplinary problems.<sup>113</sup> These students are considered to be emotionally detached from school and unable to function in the traditional school setting. They tend to display disruptive and/or violent behaviour and/or commit "expellable" but not criminal offenses.

#### **Objectives:**

- Provide an alternative educational environment that meets the legal, moral, cognitive, mental health, and academic needs of students aged 14-16 in grades 7-12 who are experiencing recurrent behavioural difficulties in the regular school system
- Provide chronically disruptive students with an opportunity to acquire acceptable social skills and improve their academic performance while developing a high sense of personal accountability

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<sup>113</sup> The Traditional Alternative Programme for Students (TAPS) is reported to be a similar programme for girls who are expelled. However, no further information on TAPS was provided by the Ministry of Education.

**Beneficiaries:** 96 students (46 each semester) benefited from the programme in 2013. Students who are selected are typically chronically disruptive students who generally meet some combination of the following criteria:

- Male
- 14-16 years old
- Low academic achiever
- Poor socio-economic environment
- Authority resistant/defiant
- High evidence of internal and external stressors, including
  - Stress and stress disorders
  - Behavioural/emotional intervention
  - Abandonment issues
  - Dysfunctional family relationships
  - Self-esteem issues
  - Substance abuse
  - Anxiety
- Exhausted internal/primary interventions at school level

**Implementation:** The SURE Programme in Nassau occupies a school complex that has a capacity for 40 students. It is a 4½ month programme designed to promote a positive self-image and discipline and develop problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Students are selected by home schools and referrals submitted to the SURE Programme for assessment. Schools must demonstrate that in-house/local interventions have been carried out and that identified behaviour has been chronic. Psychological assessments are conducted by School Special Services using BASC and WRAT4 instruments as well as personal interviews.

The programme focuses on functional literacy, vocational training, athletics, and counselling. Individual Educational Plans target the student's actual academic level. Individual and group counselling are very important, but the programme has not been able to recruit and retain two full-time male counsellors, so for periods of time it has operated without any counsellors or with only a part-time counsellor.

Teachers who transfer to the school receive a \$300 per year salary bonus that is an insufficient inducement to attract and retain the optimal all-male teaching staff.

The programme requires parental and guardian presence in student/parent/counsellor review sessions at three points during the 4½-month programme. These sessions are important for success, yet to date the programme has been unable to reach and involve male parents or guardians. Students are monitored for the first three months following exit and are visited by SURE staff once per month. SURE also maintains communication with school counsellors.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is funded and administered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. No information was provided on the number of staff and annual budget for the programme.

**Evaluation/Results:** According to the Ministry of Education, the programme is evaluated internally on an annual basis. No additional information was provided regarding programme results and evaluation.

## ***The Eagle Academy (TEA) and Life Management Male Empowerment Programme (LMMEP)***

**Background:** The National L.E.A.D. Institute, which implements these two programmes, was established in 2009 as a community correctional organization providing programmes for at-risk juveniles and pre- and post-prison/correctional facility inmates. The organization implements the TEA (alternative school for expelled) and LMMEP (program for suspended males).

The Eagle Academy (TEA) is an alternative school for expelled males that aims to reduce aggressive and negative behaviours, enabling them to positively interact and socialize; empower them with life management skills that will allow them to build character and solid values, encouraging self-esteem and boosting morale; enable them to complete their high school education; and encourage them to become productive citizens.

The LMMEP is a programme for suspended males that has serviced 200 male students since inception, enabling them to return to their respective schools without having lost ground academically, and often having advanced their reading and math skills considerably.

**Objectives:** Programme objectives include ensuring that a minimum of 200 at-risk males:

- 1) Complete and graduate from high school
- 2) Attain competency in two foundational skill areas: reading and math
- 3) Learn to manage anger and resolve conflict
- 4) Build self-confidence and positive social values
- 5) Are inspired and learn to have an appreciation and respect for authority
- 6) Receive soft skills for the job market and change their attitudes from negative to positive

**Beneficiaries:** The Eagle Academy works with young males expelled from school and LMMEP with young males who have been suspended. The academy works with 20-30 participants in each programme per semester. They are sent to the programmes from public schools for offenses that range from fights and “disrespect” to sexual offenses and carrying a weapon. They are also sent from the juvenile justice system, and there are occasional walk-ins (parents bring troubled youth).

**Implementation:** The Eagle Academy is licensed by the Ministry of Education to provide alternative education five days a week to 30 students per semester. Facilitators help the boys improve academic work in different areas, including civics, math, and English. They also focus on conflict management and on moving the boys from a “victim mentality” to being a responsible person. Youth engage in a mix of activities including job training, role playing, and academic assignments. Anger management sessions held once a week use the Templeton Foundation “Principles of Life” and “7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens.” The parents of every child who goes through the programme must complete the parenting course facilitated by the Ministry of Social Services.

The LMMEP for suspended boys runs for 16 weeks and meets for 1½ hours per week with 25 students. The curriculum includes a module on emotional intelligence, including anger management, self-esteem, and conflict resolution.

Both programmes use the same basic curriculum, which includes:

- Core curriculum (reading and math)
- Maritime training (ship husbandry, seamanship, navigation, rules of the road, etc.)
- L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Esteem, Ability, and Discipline)
- Therapy offered internally and externally
- Interactive group therapy

All of the activities are highly interactive, providing students with an opportunity to participate as well as observe. Examples of some activities include role playing, various anger management and conflict resolution scenes, drills, boating, and peer mentoring.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The organizational structure of the National L.E.A.D. Institute consists of 12 members of the Board of Trustees; a management team comprised of four individuals; six full-time employees; and seven part-time volunteer teachers and facilitators. The institute is currently funded through grants from the Lyford Cay Foundation, Templeton Foundation, Cable Cares Foundation, Commonwealth Bank, Royal Bank of Canada, UBS Trust Bank, and individual donations. The organization also runs a pre-trial and re-entry programme for prisoners at Foxhill Prison. The total operational cost of the organization's programmes is \$300,760. Regarding the cost specifically of the LMMEP and Eagle Academy programmes, in terms of a "best case scenario" with 50 students per semester, the L.E.A.D. Institute estimates the costs to be between \$96,000 and \$120,000 per year.

**Evaluation/Results:** The organization began collecting data in 2012, but this information is still on paper and the organization has only just begun analysing it (as a requirement for a grant from the Templeton Foundation) since the fall of 2013. The organization reported having data on the percentage of beneficiaries who completed the course, the percentage who returned to school, and those without further suspensions. None of this information was provided for this study.

### ***Teen Challenge Bahamas - Temperament Development Empowerment Programme***

**Background:** Teen Challenge Bahamas is a non-profit organization that uses the Teen Challenge faith-based drug and alcohol recovery methods developed in the United States in 1958. The organization was established in The Bahamas in 1988. Over the past 20 years, Teen Challenge Bahamas has opened its doors to men suffering from those addictions and treated them using a one-year mentoring programme that employs spiritual, emotional, educational, and vocational training to help break their illegal habits. In addition to its residential drug rehabilitation programme – which also serves as a half-way house for ex-offenders (see the subsection in this annex on Tertiary Prevention) – the organization has initiated the Temperament Development Empowerment Programme to “enable young people to develop a proper response to their emotions.”<sup>114</sup> The programme is for non-resident clients and was developed and is run by Eric Fox, a former drug addict and gang member who entered the rehabilitation programme in 1988.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Teach new behaviour and help teens deal with anger
- 2) Change the belief that abusive and violent behaviour are acceptable
- 3) Help individuals evaluate their own desires
- 4) Help individuals remain in relationships
- 5) Help individuals identify and attain their personal goals

<sup>114</sup> As stated in the Teen Challenge Temperament and Empowerment brochure provided for this report.

**Beneficiaries:** The programme is available to suspended students, walk-ins, and youth referred by the courts. In 2013, the Teen Challenge Temperament Development Programme attended to 39 walk-ins, 38 court referrals, and 65 suspended students.

**Implementation:** The programme is reported to help empower youth respond better to emotions of anger and stress. It is based on the Teen Challenge Programme's spiritual, educational, work, and recreational components. According to the organization, the four components can be explained as follows:

- Spiritual – Focuses on “restoration of mind, will and emotions. Students are required to participate in church services, bible reading, prayer and worship”
- Educational – “Teaching occurs formally and informally. A 20-course curriculum of group studies is merged with day to day living”
- Work – “The development of productivity, skill, training and financial income. Students are required to work at the centre and also outside the centre with a work team”
- Recreational/Social – “Activities such as sports and community events are used to assist in re-entry into society”<sup>115</sup>

The programme lasts six months. Those referred from the courts for first-time minor offenses (usually drug-related) are required to complete the programme without committing any further violent acts. Teen Challenge staff follow-up with the families during the six-month period to ensure this is the case.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** There are six paid staff working for the organization. Funding comes from individual donations, in-kind donations (mostly food), churches, and a small grant from the Ministry of Social Services. According to the organization, the overall budget is \$150,000.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations have been conducted.

### ***Boys and Girls Group***

**Background:** The Boys and Girls Group, established in 2004, is a group therapy programme run by the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation. Its clients are youth between the ages of 12 and 17 who committed criminal activities, as well as youth at risk of becoming involved in criminal activities (categorized as “beyond parental control”). Group therapy sessions take place once a week with youth who have been placed in the juvenile detention centres (Willie Mae Pratt for girls and Simpson Penn for boys).

**Objectives:** According to the Ministry of Social Services, the objectives of the programme are to:

- 1) Instil morals and confidence in the lives of young men and women
- 2) Mentor and prepare future leaders within the community
- 3) Build character and self-esteem
- 4) Challenge young men and women to “think out of the box”
- 5) Encourage young men and women to move away from mediocrity and understand their purpose in life

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<sup>115</sup> As stated in the Teen Challenge Temperament and Empowerment brochure provided for this report.

**Beneficiaries:** Youth ages 12-17 who have been released from juvenile detention centres, or are on probation, for committing minor crimes, or who are under a supervision order (deemed “beyond parental control”). According to the ministry, 112 youth participated in the programme in 2013.

**Implementation:** The programme lasts one year and has four components, each lasting three months:

- Smart Choices Better Chances
- Anger Management
- Peer Pressure
- Community Action Programme (referral to civic or social organization for further mentorship, which is a new programme)

The Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation collaborates with NGO partners (National L.E.A.D Institute, Teen Challenge, and others) to assist with the facilitation of sessions. According to the ministry, participants engage in lively discussions, role playing, and listening to presentations by guest speakers on relevant issues. They also share and find support in a cohesive environment among peer members who share similar experiences.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is funded by the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development.

**Evaluation/Results:** According to the ministry, the programme is internally evaluated semi-annually. The last evaluation was conducted in October 2013. No evaluation reports or further information regarding the evaluation were provided.

### III. Suppression

#### *Operation Ceasefire*

**Background:** Operation Ceasefire was originally developed by criminologist David Kennedy and implemented by the Boston Police Department in 1996. Since that time similar versions of the strategy have been implemented in cities across the United States. As a deterrence strategy, the intervention is designed to focus on aggressively arresting and prosecuting the most violent offenders (especially involving firearms), warning other gang members that violent crimes will not be tolerated and will carry serious punishments, and preventing youth from following a path of crime. The elements of the programme in Boston included (1) cracking down on repeat offenders and illegal firearms trafficking using suppression tactics, (2) a communications campaign involving meetings with both community groups and gang members where everyone was informed that gang violence will provoke zero-tolerance, and (3) after telling gang members of the repercussions of violence, having service providers (probation and parole officers, social services, churches, and other community groups) offer them services to help them change their lives.

In The Bahamas, Operation Ceasefire is a component of the PLP’s Safe Bahamas Plan launched when the PLP party won elections in 2012. The programme is designed to implement the following activities:<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> See Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), “Project Safe Bahamas: A Tough Innovative Plan to Fight Crime and Reduce Violence,” at <http://myplp.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Crime.pdf>.

- Strike force teams: immediate law enforcement response to any violence
- Intense law enforcement focus on repeat offenders and most violent criminals
- Saturation patrols in crime hotspots
- Increased surveillance of accused persons out on bail
- Conducting trials within 12 months, and preventing release on bail for those accused of murder
- Trying illegal possession of high-powered weapons and ammunition cases in the Supreme Court, resulting in tougher sentences
- Direct intervention to stop retaliatory violence with outreach workers
- Using individuals (“violence breakers”) who can connect with those at highest risk for shooting or being shot to provide mentoring, conflict mediation, and links to social services
- 24/7 hotline with outreach workers always available
- Shock treatment: bringing at-risk youth to clinics, hospitals, and morgues to show them the consequences of gun violence
- Clergy and police working together to provide safe havens from violence

**Objectives:** No information was provided by the Ministry of National Security regarding programme objectives.

**Target Population:** According to the documents available, the target population for this programme includes serious repeat offenders, at-risk youth, and communities with high levels of crime and violence.

**Implementation:** Despite being one of the Ministry of National Security’s flagship crime reduction programmes, surprisingly little information was available on implementation of Operation Ceasefire. As of 2014, the Ministry of National Security could provide little information on any activities implemented under the programme. From what this report could gather, programme implementation differed significantly from the original initiative in Boston, as well as from the proposed PLP programme design.

Although saturation patrols have consistently been employed, according to the ministry and the RBPF, no detailed information was provided regarding when, where, or for what reasons these patrols were deployed. Nor was any information available on the programme’s impact on crime (see the next subsection on CompStat and hot spot policing). No information was provided regarding how and to what result the police have focused on violent repeat offenders. Information provided by the Office of the Attorney General confirmed that while that office is still aiming to have all murder trials finish within 12 months, it is still far from achieving this target (see the Swift Justice Initiative subsection below). Regarding increased surveillance of those on bail, a new electronic ankle bracelet monitoring system was created, but its implementation still covers very few cases and it still has several flaws (see below).

The prevention component of Operation Ceasefire is being developed by the new Citizen Security Unit. This unit has been working for a little over a year with Carlos Reid and Youth Against Violence to develop four prevention-oriented programme components: community listening forums, violence breakers, shock treatment, and peace on the streets.

Beginning in August 2013 the ministry undertook a series of “community listening” forums, with a panel including senior officials from the Ministry of National Security; and law enforcement. events including two general forums with community leaders in New Providence, a forum with high school leaders, a forum with youth leaders, a forum with local pastors, and a forum in



Grand Bahama. The suggestions put forth from the community in the first forums were documented and responded to in a small booklet published by the ministry.

The “violence breakers” are a group of individuals (oftentimes ex-gang members) selected to intervene and mediate street conflicts between gangs. They also act as outreach workers to help keep at-risk youth from getting further involved with gangs and crime. The ministry has already selected 10 violence breakers (and is working on reaching 20) who were chosen for their influence in their communities. The group has already performed two interventions in the Fox Hill area after two mass shootings. According to interviews, the group organized basketball games in the neighbourhood as a way to talk to youth and gang members in the area.

“Shock treatment” is intended to be a deterrence programme for youth in conflict with the law and youth at risk (suspended from school or under supervision orders for being “beyond parental control”). The programme began in 2014 aiming to influence youth by showing both the negative effects of violence and crime and the positive ways that youth can change their lives. The idea is to take participants on a series of field trips to prisons, hospitals, vocational centres, hotels, and other tourist industry job providers. A group of participants ages 10-17 have been through the programme, and another group was scheduled to begin in October 2014. Participants have also been exposed to potential mentors who will spend four hours per month with them, and make contact with them via phone or email twice a week. Mentors have been vetted and approved by a committee and are part of the Give Every Child a Father Programme.

Finally, “peace on the streets” is envisioned as an initiative to bring politicians, law enforcement, and pastors to neighbourhoods with high levels of violent crime. The idea is to mobilize community involvement to combat gangs and crime.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** No information was provided regarding total funding, budget, or staff for this programme. The estimated cost of the shock treatment component in 2014 was \$40,000–\$50,000 (six months), with an estimated annual budget of \$80,000–\$100,000. The violence breakers component is estimated to cost \$150,000 annually.

**Evaluation/Results:** No information was provided regarding evaluations conducted, evaluation plans, or results expected from the overall programme. The shock treatment component had a process evaluation scheduled for December 2014.

### ***CompStat and Hot Spot Policing***

**Background:** The RBPF has been working to build intelligence and use technology and new techniques to act more strategically. This includes expanding the intelligence unit, using a Geographical Information System (GIS) to map crime hotspots, and CompStat meetings. These strategies, if they are implemented effectively, represent a departure from conventional policing strategies that allocate resources uniformly or based on calls for service.

Over the past two decades, a series of rigorous evaluations have suggested that police can be effective when they target small geographic areas with high levels of crime. Hot spot policing involves identifying high crime locations (hot spots), developing a tailored response to the identified crime problem, and delivering the response.

In recent years there has also been widespread adoption of CompStat, a management tool created by the New York Police Department to incorporate crime mapping as part of a broader effort to share information and increase accountability of field commanders. The idea is to

increase the availability of evidence for tracking police performance via highly structured meetings of senior police officials and operational commanders who report the tracking data on their crime patterns.

**Implementation:** The RBPF adopted the CompStat model in the late 1990s and has since complemented it with the use of GIS crime mapping technology. During weekly CompStat meetings the deputy commissioner meets with all commanders of the nine geographical divisions in New Providence, all commanders of specialized units, and the six commanders of Grand Bahamas and the Family Islands (via video conference). They discuss the priority crimes against persons and property from the previous week. The commanders are expected to present the strategies they are using to address crime trends in their neighbourhoods.

While the RBPF officers interviewed confirmed that GIS was being used to map crime hot spots, no detailed information could be provided regarding the analysis of crime trends and how this is used to determine police responses. Hot spot policing should focus on identifying problem areas, conducting detailed analyses, and developing a specific response. From the interviews conducted, crime trend analysis was identified as an area where capacity is still lacking. Beyond generating weekly crime statistics, the RBPF was said not to conduct any more in-depth and overarching crime trend analysis. Nor does it employ analysts specifically dedicated to this or have partnerships with academics to do so. Moreover, it is not clear that information and analysis are being used to direct police patrols at targeted times or locations. When asked about their patrolling methods, interviewees described traditional patrolling methods in which routine patrolling routes are assigned in each division and a productivity report is provided afterward by the officer. As some studies have noted, key factors for the success of hot spot policing include mapping and analysing crime hot spots over a longer period of time (more than one year) to determine where to increase patrols, tracking patrol cars to actually guarantee they are doing more patrolling in hot spot areas, and conducting district-level “COP-stat” meetings with the officers actually conducting the patrols (Sherman, 2014).

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** Funding and staff for this initiative come directly from the Royal Bahamas Police Force Budget. The author was not provided with information on any additional cost or human resources dedicated to this strategy.

**Evaluation/Results:** No formal evaluation of this strategy has been conducted and no information was provided regarding results.

### ***Swift Justice Initiative***

**Background:** As one of the components of the Project Safe Bahamas policy framework, the Swift Justice Initiative aims to increase the capacity of the judicial system to expedite the process of trying and convicting those found guilty of serious crimes. This is particularly important given the extensive impediments currently faced by the judicial process (see Section III of this report).

According to the Safe Bahamas Policy framework, the Swift Justice Initiative should support the following:

- A substantial increase in resources for the criminal justice system
- Prosecutors and investigating detectives working better together to bring cases to trial

- Improved coordination between the police, prosecutors, and others involved in the administration of justice and judges
- Creation of a death penalty unit to fast-track penalty appeals
- Strengthening of witness protection
- Additional criminal trial courts
- Amending sentencing guidelines for cases requiring a death penalty sentence
- Trials within six months for anyone who threatens or tampers with a judge, juror, prosecutor, witness, policeman, or social worker involved in giving a social inquiry report, or with anyone else involved in the administration of the criminal justice system

**Objectives:** In order to ensure that the files are properly prepared from the investigative stage on to trial – and thereby clear decades of backlogged cases and significantly increase the country’s conviction rate – the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) began implementing a pilot of the Swift Justice Initiative with the support of the IDB in November 2013. Specific objectives of the pilot programme include:

- 1) Improving court reporting and transcript generation through the introduction of an efficient digital recording system
- 2) Supporting the implementation of an Integrated Justice Information System with an efficient business model (maximizing efficacy within the institution and improving coordination among relevant institutions) for scheduling court dates, filing legal documents, and so on
- 3) Contributing to improved case management and the reduction of the backlog of pending cases at the Supreme Court level

**Beneficiaries:** Both victims of crimes and defendants accused of crimes would benefit from more speedy trials. No information could be obtained from the OAG on the number of individuals who have benefited from the pilot programme to date.

**Implementation:** The OAG launched the Swift Justice Initiative in May 2012 and began implementing the pilot in November 2013. According to the OAG, four new criminal courts were scheduled to begin receiving cases in April 2014, but as of May of that year the new courts were still not functional.

Regarding *case management*, a new goal was established that all new cases be tried within 12 months of an individual being charged. However, this goal has yet to be reached. A new policy has been put in place that the police cannot charge an individual until the OAG has signed off on the case file, which now must be complete (minus forensics and pathology reports that may take more time) to be approved for signature. An individual can only be held after being arrested for 48 hours (this can be extended by a judge to 96 hours) before he or she must be charged. Currently the OAG has a team of lawyers reviewing each case file to ensure they are complete before they are signed off on, helping to reduce delays in the courts. Of the existing backlog of cases, 568 have been scheduled for trial, while 491 cases still do not have trial dates.<sup>117</sup>

Regarding *improving court reporting*, a consultant was hired to identify problems and make recommendations to improve the efficiency of the Court Reporting Unit. The contract with the previous private company was severed and a new director hired. All stenographers working for the Magistrates Court were also pulled and sent to the Court of Appeals to get cases moving

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<sup>117</sup> Data provided by the Office of the Attorney General, June 5, 2014.

again. In the meantime, two vendor quotes were sought to implement digital recording systems (eliminating the need for stenographers) in the new courts.

Although the pilot started in 2013, the proposed Integrated Justice System is still not operational. The aim of the shared system is to organize cases with a single case number from arrest to conviction. The system will include a shared calendar, which will prevent private attorneys from accepting more than one case scheduled at the same day and time. Currently this is a significant problem because many lawyers reportedly accept cases scheduled for the same time, leading judges to have to reschedule and delay trials.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** While an important component of the Swift Justice Initiative according to Project Safe Bahamas is increased resources for the criminal justice system, this has only partially happened in practice. According to Ministry of Finance projections, the provisional expenditure for the OAG/Ministry of Legal Affairs was reduced (by \$61,743) between the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 fiscal years, but the budget of the Judicial Department and the Court of Appeals increased by \$128,306 and \$853,463 respectively. However, between the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 fiscal years, the three institutions were projected to have budgets reduced by \$2,902,033 overall.<sup>118</sup> This may have been offset by the funding provided by the IDB for the Swift Justice Initiative pilot project in the amount of \$250,000 for 18 months, with \$24,000 in in-kind counterpart funding from the government.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluation of the initiative was provided for this report. Preliminary results from the improvements in case management do seem to show a reduction in the time to present a Voluntary Bill of Indictment.<sup>119</sup> The average wait for the presentation of such an indictment went from 344 days prior to October 2013 to 116 days as of February 2014.<sup>120</sup>

### ***Electronic Monitoring of Persons on Bail***

**Background:** The electronic monitoring system forms part of the government's overall strategy to increase efficiency in the criminal justice system. It aims to improve the current system of pre-trial supervision (and post-trial supervision pending the appropriate legislation) to monitor low-risk offenders. The Ministry of National Security envisions the electronic monitoring system as an effective alternative to placing offenders on remand at the Department of Correctional Services while awaiting trial.

**Objectives:** To promote public safety and reduce overcrowding at Foxhill Prison through the use of advanced technologies to monitor and supervise individuals accused of criminal offenses prior to trial.

**Target Population:** This alternative programme is targeted to non-violent and juvenile criminals who are neither flight risks nor pose endangerment to society.

**Implementation:** The government began implementing a pilot version of the electronic monitoring programme in November 2010 with the monitoring of 100 individuals. The government contracted The Bahamas Co., Ltd, Secure Alert Inc. (ISA), and International

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<sup>118</sup> Calculations based on the Ministry of Finance's Summary of Agencies' Recurrent Expenditure 2013/2014.

<sup>119</sup> By Bahamian law, all criminal cases must be tried in the Supreme Court. Previously all cases were required to be heard in the Magistrates Court – which would hear witnesses, expert testimony, type up the case file, etc. – before being tried in the Supreme Court. The law was later amended to create a Voluntary Bill of Indictment that gathers all depositions and documents in a single file to be presented to the accused at the Magistrates Court, making it possible for the judge to immediately send the case to the Supreme Court.

<sup>120</sup> According to the Office of the Attorney General.

Surveillance Services Corporation (ISS) to provide the electronic monitoring equipment and monitoring services. The electronic monitoring device records an offender's movements and reports them to the electronic monitoring centre. According to the RBPF, the centre's staff monitor and track offenders in the electronic monitoring programme 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

From 2010 to the present, 400 individuals have been monitored and the programme is operational on eight islands (New Providence, Abaco, Eleuthera, Exuma, San Salvador, Cat Island, Bimini, and Grand Bahama). The project is tied to the Penal Code Act Chapter 84 and the 2010 Electronic Rules, which give discretion to the judge to decide if an individual will be placed in the programme. According to interviewees this has been problematic because the programme was designed for those who commit minor offenses, but recently judges have been sending individuals involved in more serious crimes.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme is funded through the Ministry of National Security with an overall budget of \$2.1 million. The staff includes private contractors from ISA and ISS, and staff from the Royal Bahamas Police Force and the Department of Correctional Services. In total, there is one administrator, two managers, one assistant manager, and 15 technical staff dedicated to this programme.

**Evaluation/Results:** While no evaluations have been conducted to date, an annual internal report is produced. According to authorities, to date there have only been four individuals who violated bail and did not appear for trial. The ministry is said to be investigating the exact number of individuals who have committed crimes while on the programme, but this information could not be provided.

### ***Remand Court***

**Background:** The Remand Court was envisioned to expeditiously conduct the hearings of offenders who are on remand (pre-trial detention) at the Department of Correctional Services in order to reduce overcrowding at the prison. For many years offenders have been regularly transported from the prison to attend court in the downtown area. According to the ministry, prison staff and members of the public expressed security and safety concerns regarding the possibility of crimes occurring during transport. A Remand Court closer to the prison and away from the downtown area was seen as a solution to this problem.

**Objectives:** Objectives include accelerating the judgment of remand cases and eliminating the dangers associated with transporting prisoners regularly to and from the centre.

**Beneficiaries:** Both pre-trial detainees, who will have a quicker trial, and the community, which will be safer from potential incidents when detainees are transported for trial. No information was provided regarding how many pre-trial detainees have been tried at the court.

**Implementation:** While the court has been established in facilities close to Foxhill Prison, no information was provided on the functioning of the court.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** No information was provided regarding the funding, cost, or staff of the initiative.

**Evaluation/Results:** Despite numerous requests, no information was provided on the results of the Remand Court.

## IV. Tertiary Prevention and Rehabilitation

### *Aftercare Services*

**Background:** Aftercare services have been provided by the Department of Rehabilitation and Welfare of the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development since 1979. The services last one year, beginning before and ending after release. The activities are intended to help juveniles from the girls and boys detention centres reintegrate into society and avoid negative behaviours and recidivism.

Services provided include:

- Individual counselling
- Group counselling
- Family counselling
- Assistance with school re-entry
- Referrals to needed services
- Monitoring supervision for 12 months

**Objectives:** Aftercare Services is a programme designed to address treatment needs and to prepare residents from the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls and the Simpson Penn Centre for boys to return to the community.

**Beneficiaries:** Juveniles between the ages of 12 and 17 who are re-entering the community after confinement in a juvenile detention centre for committing a crime or being deemed “beyond parental control” by the courts. According to the ministry, 50 youth benefitted from the programme during the 2012/2013 fiscal year and 25 youth are currently participating.

**Implementation:** All residents discharged from the Willie Mae Pratt Centre for girls and Simpson Penn Centre for boys are required to participate in the Aftercare Services Programme.

The programme lasts one year and consists of three components:

- 1) Discharge Planning with a probation officer, which commences six months prior to a resident’s release from confinement. In this phase the juvenile and the officer try to identify the challenges that the individual will face returning to the community and address these transitional difficulties in a discharge plan.
- 2) A Re-Entry Programme in which residents participate for four months immediately following release from confinement. This programme is a continuation of discharge planning and allows Aftercare Officers to refer the beneficiary to services and monitor services offered to clients and their families. Probation officers conduct home and school visits, and make phone calls to the family on a regular basis.
- 3) Follow-up Care during which, after the four months of participation in the Re-Entry Programme, the residents are referred to the Boys and Girls Group (see the subsection in this annex on Secondary Prevention) together with other troubled youth for a period of eight months. During that time they become involved in group counselling in addition to individual and family counselling as the need arises.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** Four probation officers work on this programme. Funding is provided directly from the annual budget of the Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services of the Ministry of Social Services. No information was provided on the specific budget for this programme.

**Evaluation/Results:** According to the ministry, annual evaluations are conducted internally, but no information from past evaluations was provided for this report. The last evaluation was reported to have taken place in October 2013. No information on recidivism by participants could be provided.

### ***National L.E.A.D Institute Project Re-entry Bahamas***

**Background:** The National L.E.A.D. Institute was founded in 2009 and is now an international organization that has just established an office in North Carolina. The institute is a community correctional organization that provides programmes for at-risk juveniles as well as pre- and post-prison/correctional facility re-entry services for inmates. The institute is a member and affiliate of the American Correctional Association, North Carolina Correctional Association, and Caribbean Association of Corrections.

Project Re-Entry has been in operation since July 2011 helping ex-offenders reintegrate into their communities. It began working with the North Carolina Correctional Association in October 2013 to replicate the Project Re-Entry being carried out there. The North Carolina project reports a success rate of about 80 per cent.<sup>121</sup> It has also helped inmates learn skills, build relationships, and reunite with family upon release. The National L.E.A.D Institute has been working for over a year with three Bahamian inmates in North Carolina. It aims to ensure their smooth and effective transition to The Bahamas. The institute serves as a liaison that initiates the intake process, provides a needs assessment, and re-connects inmates with their families in The Bahamas.

**Objectives:** Help inmates re-enter society after incarceration, find employment, re-connect with family, and avoid recidivism.

**Beneficiaries:** At present, L.E.A.D. is providing services and programmes for 10 inmates at a time for a period of 12 weeks in the Project Re-Entry Bahamas Pre-Release Programme, and for 12 former offenders in the Post-Release Programme. It is also working currently with three inmates in prison in North Carolina.

**Implementation:** The 16-week Re-Entry Programme is designed to start when an offender is still incarcerated and end when that individual has been successfully reintegrated into his or her community as a law-abiding citizen. However, only recently has the institute been able to service inmates prior to release. In order for inmates to benefit from what L.E.A.D. can provide, the organization considers it critical to get involved with inmates when they have 18 or fewer months of incarceration remaining on their sentence.

The Re-Entry Programme is still in a pilot phase, with plans to roll out the full project by October 2015.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The programme currently has three staff and a \$115,000 budget with no public funding. The organization is seeking a grant from the Templeton Foundation. The

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<sup>121</sup> See the National Centre for Justice Planning, North Carolina, "Proud and Innovative Programmes," at [http://www.ncjp.org/states/ncr?vdt=glossary%7Cpage\\_4](http://www.ncjp.org/states/ncr?vdt=glossary%7Cpage_4).

total estimated cost for the operation of The Bahamas and North Carolina branch after the rollout is \$300,760.00 annually.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations have been done to date, but the organization plans to incorporate a rigorous data collection and monitoring and evaluation plan into the final project.

### ***Prison Fellowship***

**Background:** The Bahamas Prison Fellowship is an affiliate of the International Prison Fellowship programme, which equips local churches and volunteers to work with prisoners spiritually and help them to not become repeat offenders. It aims to help inmates become leaders of their families, communities, and churches once they are released. It also provides support to families and administers a half-way house for ex-offenders released from prison.

**Objectives:** According to The Bahamas Prison Fellowship leader Anthony Sands, the organization's goal is to reach out and provide spiritual guidance to inmates and ex-offenders and their families and help them reintegrate into society.

**Beneficiaries:** Inside the prison, the programme works with many individuals, but the half-way house supports only up to 20 individuals at a time (who stay on average less than six months). The programme can work with up to 100 individuals a year.

**Implementation:** Services begin with ministering to groups of interested prisoners once a month within Foxhill Prison. At this point inmates who are due to be released are assessed for their potential to stay at the half-way house as a transitional home. Individuals who express remorse and interest in turning their lives around are able to spend up to 18 months at the half-way house. Services include counselling and guidance, mentorship, and support with reconnecting with family and building relationships. Residents of the half-way house are expected to look for work and do chores at the facility. They must not engage in crime or use of addictive substances while housed at the facility.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The group's main office and one staff member are funded by a government grant of \$14,000 through the Ministry of National Security. The remainder of its annual budget, roughly \$20,000, is financed through fundraisers and church donations.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations have been conducted.

### ***Dean Granger Centre Half-Way House***

**Background:** The Dean Granger Centre Half-Way House is operated by the Anglican Archdiocese of The Bahamas. It started 27 years ago as a shelter for ex-offenders. When all or most of the beneficiaries were found to be drug abusers, a substance abuse component was integrated into the programme.

**Objectives:** Provide support, shelter, and guidance for ex-offenders and substance abusers.

**Beneficiaries:** The centre helps between 40-45 individuals at a time. It estimates that 90 per cent have been in prison at some time in their lives. Some are referred through the courts or the Department of Correctional Services.



**Implementation:** While in the past the programme has had enough funding to employ trained counsellors and implement drug rehabilitation programmes, it is currently unable to provide any such services. Beneficiaries are offered a place to stay and spiritual guidance.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The centre receives a stipend of \$15,000 annually from the government, and men who work are asked to contribute to their room and board.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations have been conducted.

### ***Great Commissions Ministries International, The Hope House***

**Background:** Great Commissions Ministries International is an outreach, faith-based organization established in The Bahamas in 1987. In addition to several other services, it runs the Hope House which is a half-way house for ex-offenders and substance abusers. It also provides community service jobs as an alternative sentence for first-time offenders.

**Objectives:** To help ex-offenders and substance abusers take control of their lives, re-establish relationships, and reintegrate into society.

**Beneficiaries:** The Hope House hosted 100 ex-offenders and substance abusers and 40 individuals with alternative sentences in 2013.

**Implementation:** Individuals may stay up to one year, and undergo an assessment after six months. They participate in group therapy, individual counselling, and sessions on personal development and empowerment, anger management, and mending relationships. The centre also accepts offenders who have been sentenced by a judge to community service (often for drugs, stealing, or carrying a knife). These individuals are sent from the courts and must complete a certain number of hours of service. The Hope House uses these opportunities to help counsel individuals and keep them from slipping further into crime. These first-time offenders do work in the yard, help prepare meals, and carry out other tasks. The Hope House then reports to the probation officer and the judge regarding compliance.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** The Hope House is run by six paid staff and several volunteer counsellors. It is funded through a government grant and donations from individuals and small companies. The entire centre (including other programmes) requires about \$50,000 a month to run.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations have been conducted.

### ***Teen Challenge Bahamas Half-Way House and Rehabilitation***

**Background:** Teen Challenge Bahamas is an affiliate of Teen Challenge in the United States and was established in The Bahamas in 1988. The current director, Eric Fox, is a former drug addict and gang member who went through the substance abuse programme in 1988. Over the years he has expanded the work of the organization to include temperament management programmes (see the section in this annex on Secondary Prevention), programmes for suspended students, and a half-way house for both addicts and ex-offenders.

**Objectives:** To help ex-offenders and substance abusers rehabilitate themselves and reintegrate into society.

**Beneficiaries:** Residents of the half-way house specifically include those ex-offenders who are substance abusers and/or former gang members.

**Implementation:** Some ex-offenders stay at Teen Bahamas as a transitional home until they can find a job, reconcile with friends and family, and reintegrate into society. These individuals participate in temperament development programmes on anger management and sessions on repairing personal relationships.

**Funding/Budget/Staff:** There are six paid staff working for the organization. Funding comes from individual donations, in-kind donations (mostly food), churches, and a small grant from the Ministry of Social Services. According to the organization, the overall budget is \$150,000.

**Evaluation/Results:** No evaluations have been conducted.

## **Annex 8. Update on 2014 Amendments**

### *Marco's Law 2014 Amendments*

In 2014 the Parliament enacted certain amendments to the Child Protection Act, which included granting power to the court to designate new guardians for children, as well as implementing rules to the Marco alert system for missing children (similar to the Amber Alert in the United States).

### *2014 Anti-Crime Legislation*

In 2013 the PLP administration introduced a package of anti-crime bills. The majority of the amendments were approved in the second half of 2014 and included amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, Justice Protection Act, Prevention of Bribery Act, Sexual Offences Act, Correctional Services Act, Firearms Act, Evidence Act, Evidence Act 2, Penal Code, Proceeds of Crime, Juries Act, and the Bail Act.

#### *Anti- Terrorism Act (Amendment)*

- Regulates terrorist entities

#### *Justice Protection Act (Amendment)*

- Regulates on obstruction of justice
- Anti-gang offences, participation in an organized criminal group, obstruction of justice and trafficking in persons are included in the offenses that may give rise to protection under the justice protection programme

#### *Prevention of Bribery Act (Amendment)*

- *Insertion of sections on bribes to foreign public officials*

#### *Sexual Offences Act (Amendment)*

- *Creation and Regulation of sex offender Register and Registry*

#### *Correctional Services Act*

- *Regulation of legal custody of person*
- *Regulation of administration and functions of correctional facilities and holding facilities*
- *Establishment of correctional Services Review Board*
- *Regulations of employment and earning of inmates*
- *Regulations of removal and discharge of inmates*
- *Release of inmates on licence*
- *Regulation of offences committed by inmates*

#### *Firearms Act (Amendment)*

- Forbids the exportation of firearms and ammunition without a license
- Regulates the granting or refusal of export or in-transit licences by the Licensing Authority
- Increased sentences for: persons importing any firearm or ammunition into the Bahamas, persons introducing a revolver into the Bahamas, persons possessing or acquiring firearms, guns or ammunitions without a firearm certificate in force, persons

having incorrect/false information on their firearms license, persons possessing firearms in circumstances considered illegal by the Act

- Regulates the transnational transfers of unmarked or improperly marked firearms
- Prohibits high powered firearms without permission of the Licensing Authority

#### *Evidence Act (Amendment)*

- Admission of evidence recorded on CCTV establishes presumption of presence at crime scene
- Presumption of presence at crime scene when electronic monitoring device is found at the scene of an alleged crime

#### *Evidence Act 2 (Amendment)*

- Possibility to give evidence by way of a live television link
- Possibility to use data from electronic device
- Regulations of evidence of witness on grounds of fear and distress

#### *Penal Code (Amendment)*

- *Regulation on Gang Membership*
- *Regulation on participation in an Organized Criminal Group*
- *Increased penalty for violence against a judge, magistrate, juror, witness, counsel, agent, prosecutor or party in legal proceeding*

#### *Proceeds of Crime (Amendment)*

- *Inclusion of the possibility to seize personal properties by police officers*
- *Inclusion of offenses under the Gaming Act and under the Travellers Currency Declaration Act in the Schedule of the Act*

#### *Juries (Amendment)*

- *Qualifications for jury service*
- *Regulation on jury lists*
- *Regulation on applications to remove name from Approved list*
- *Regulation of methodology to draw jurors*
- *Regulation on the service of Summons*
- *Regulation on repeal and replacement of jurors*

#### *Bail (Amendment)*

- *Gives the burden of proof to applicant of bail*

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