

3. Security situation

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The security situation and conflict dynamics vary widely in Colombia. This report provides a brief, high-level overview of the main areas of dispute, key groups involved, and overview of types of violence occurring in the reference period. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive picture of the conflict dynamics in every dimension of Colombia.

Sources indicated that illegal armed groups have increased their presence in the country, including in remote areas.[118](#) The expansion is closely related to the profit-seeking of these groups from illegal economies such as drug trafficking and illegal mining.[119](#) Sources reported that, according to a July 2025 military intelligence report, illegal armed groups have expanded territorial presence in recent years and, in some areas, they also forge alliances to control profits from illegal economies such as drug trafficking, illegal mining, and extortion,[120](#) as well as to coordinate to evade authorities and security operations.[121](#) There were also examples of high profile attacks in urban areas in 2025 such as in August 2025 with two large attacks attributed to FARC dissident factions: a car bomb attack in Cali that killed 6 and injured 60 people and a drone attack on a police helicopter outside of Medellín, that killed at least 12 people.[122](#)

In July 2025, Reuters reported that, according to a government internal security report, illegal armed groups have increased the number of combatants and expanded their territorial control in the last three years, despite government efforts to negotiate ceasefires under the 'Total Peace' plan.[123](#) According to the report, combatants increased from around 15 000 in mid-2022 to over 21 950 in June 2025.[124](#) In November 2025, El Tiempo reported that according to another intelligence report, the number of combatants of illegal armed groups increased to over 25 200.[125](#)

Illegal armed actors are accused of committing human rights violations against civilians, including forced displacement, land dispossession, restrictions on the freedom of movement, killings, targeted killings, threats, forced recruitment, and use of antipersonnel mines.[126](#) In a number of areas of the country, illegal armed groups have established forms of social and territorial control that resemble parallel governance schemes, with the monopoly of justice, authority, and local economies, through the use of systematic violence, including threats, targeted killings, forced displacement, and massacres.[127](#) According to Pares, illegal armed groups are creating social organisations to coopt community programs and drive away community organisations and human rights defenders.[128](#) Sources reported that illegal armed groups conduct surveillance via electronic communications and community networks, and plan armed actions with information collected through these channels.[129](#) Members of the security

forces have also been assassinated in the course of their duties, with 146 cases reported between January-September 2025, an increase from 64 in 2024 and 69 in 2023.[130](#)

The UN reported in September 2025 that attacks by armed groups have been increasing in recent months.[131](#) Violence in areas such as Catatumbo (Norte de Santander), Bolívar, Cauca, and Arauca remained complex.[132](#) According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), between January and August 2025, it recorded over 1 200 attacks against civilians, affecting over 85 000 civilians; 659 armed actions, affecting 7500 people; and 342 instances of use of explosive devices, affecting over 6 500 people.[133](#)

Period	Category	Location / Actor	Armed actions
2023	Departments / regions	Cauca	188
		Caribbean region	174
		Antioquia	114
		Catatumbo	87
	Total	Country	1 047
2024	Departments / regions	Cauca	240
		Caribbean region	164
		Antioquia	118
		Arauca	81
		Catatumbo	71
	Total	Country	1 067
	Illegal armed groups	General Staff of Blocks and Fronts (EMBF)	367
		Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC)	177
		National Liberation Army (ELN)	112
		National Coordinator of the Bolivarian Army (CNEB)	41
ACSN		19	
January–May 2025	Departments / regions	Catatumbo	140
		Cauca	96
		Caribbean region	67
		Antioquia	63
		Arauca	39
	Total	Country	603
	Illegal armed groups	EMC & General Staff of Blocks and Fronts (EMBF, combined)	179
		National Liberation Army (ELN)	162
		Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC)	65
	January–July 2025	Departments	Cauca
Antioquia			67
Norte de Santander			64
Valle del Cauca			50
Nariño			45
	Bolívar	43	

Table 1: Armed actions by illegal armed groups in Colombia (2023-2025), 18 June 2025[134](#)

The areas most affected by violence tended to be those formerly controlled by the FARC-EP,[135](#) with a significant presence[136](#) and contested resources such as coca crops and illegal mining.[137](#) These areas include Antioquia, Norte de Santander, Bolívar, Cauca, La Guajira,[138](#) Chocó, Nariño, Putumayo, Caquetá, Guaviare, Meta, Valle del Cauca,[139](#) and Arauca.[140](#)

Sources noted the increasing use of drones by illegal armed groups to conduct surveillance and attacks against state security forces and/or other illegal armed groups.[141](#) Drones are reportedly commercial crafts modified to drop explosives.[142](#) In July 2025, for example, FARC dissident groups launched a drone against the police station of Santander de Quilichao, Cauca, killing a female police officer and injuring two others, and in rural Jamundí, Valle del Cauca, a

drone attack against a local community left two children injured.¹⁴³ *Semana* reported that, according to the Colombian military, 252 attacks with drones were documented in the country between January and July 2025, an average of 1.29 drone attacks per day.¹⁴⁴ In October 2025, the army indicated that in the previous year-and-a-half, over 350 drone attacks were reported, which left 15 state security forces killed and 170 wounded.¹⁴⁵ Most drone attacks have taken place in Cauca, particularly in Argelia (30 attacks), El Tambo (29), and Suárez (22).¹⁴⁶ According to the army, in March and April 2025, three members of the army and two civilians were killed by drones in Norte de Santander.¹⁴⁷ *France24* quoted a representative of *Vivamos Humanos*, a Colombian NGO that advocates for human rights in the Catatumbo area, as indicating that there are no records of drone attacks directed exclusively against civilians, but civilians have been the collateral victims of these attacks that sometimes are launched against areas with high population density, killing and wounding civilians and destroying houses.¹⁴⁸ In July 2024, a FARC dissident group dropped an explosive from a makeshift drone over a football field in Argelia, Cauca, killing a 10-year-old boy and injuring 10 others while they were playing on the field.¹⁴⁹

The security situation in ethnic communities, including Afro-descendants and indigenous, remained a 'serious concern' due to human rights violations and armed actors' disruption of their traditional way of life through restrictions on freedom of movement, the imposition of curfews, and heightened surveillance, including the erosion of cultural practices, customary governance structures and the communities' ability to exercise their constitutional right to autonomy.¹⁵⁰ The Awá, in Ricaurte, Nariño, represent a particular concern due to attacks and threats against them.¹⁵¹ In August 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also included the indigenous Emberá Dobida, Emberá Chami, Emberá Katío, Emberá Wounnan, Zenú, and Tule, as well as Afro-descendant communities in Chocó.¹⁵²

Between January and August 2024, 889 people were victims of intra-urban displacement in Medellín, particularly from *Comunas* 13, 1, 7, 8, and 3.¹⁵³ Homicide numbers in Medellín have decreased over the years in part due to a 'sophistication' in the commission of criminal activities, which are mostly selective and relying upon parallel governance of areas of Medellín.¹⁵⁴ Colombian think tank Ideas For Peace Foundation (Fundación Ideas para la Paz, FIP) similarly indicated that violence is no longer committed massively as in the past due to the transformation of the conflict which currently focuses in certain zones that are disputed among illegal armed groups and less with state security forces.¹⁵⁵ ACLED reported that 'civilians face less deadly but more pervasive violence during Petro's presidency.'¹⁵⁶

On 11 September 2025, the EU Parliament voted to include FARC dissident groups and the ELN in the list of terrorist organisations.¹⁵⁷

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