

3.1.1. Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC)

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AGC, also known as Gulf Clan (Clan del Golfo) or Ejército Gaitanista de Colombia (EGC), is one of the most powerful illegal organisations in Colombia, with over 14 000 combatants and present in 316 municipalities in 24 out of the country's 32 departments, including Antioquia, Córdoba, Chocó, Sucre, Bolívar, Atlántico, Magdalena, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Meta and Casanare and nearby localities.[165] Human Rights Watch indicated that as of June 2024, the Gulf Clan had presence in 392[166] of Colombia’s 1 104 municipalities.[167] AGC emerged from the demobilisation of the AUC in 2006[168] and currently consists of 34 criminal structures consolidated around six blocks, up from 22 Fronts.[169]

AGC operates a mixed structure, with a central hierarchy and regional franchises that operate with certain level of autonomy, facilitating its expansion and control over territories and revenues over illicit economies, as well as military response to local threats.[170] According to Pares, AGC is 'highly adaptable' to regional and local environments.[171]

AGC engages in armed confrontations with ELN and FARC dissident groups to dispute illicit economies, often causing displacements, killings, and threats in local communities.[172] It also engages in drug and arms trafficking, illegal mining, trafficking of migrants, money laundering, control over medicines and alcohol, and extortion of both legal and illegal economic activities.[173] AGC seeks to dominate strategic real estate important for the export of drugs such as stretches of the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines, internal movement corridors within the country and the border with Venezuela and borders with Panama in the Darién Gap and Venezuela.[174] According to Pares, AGC carries out armed stoppages (*paros armados*), the systematic targeting and assassination of state security forces (*plan pistola*),[175] restrictions to the freedom of movement, and confinements in order to exert political pressure or exert authority in areas of influence.[176] The AGC is accused of crimes comprising forced recruitment, including of minors, and of exerting social control in areas of influence.[177]

According to Pares, between January 2023 and May 2025, AGC was involved in 514 armed actions, including armed clashes with other illegal armed groups and state security forces, confinement, forced displacement, and threats and killings of social leaders.[178]

In February 2025, the government announced the establishment of a negotiation table with the AGC, but the illegal armed group indicated that the conditions for negotiations were not in place.

179 In March 2025, the government restarted bombardments against the AGC after the group killed four soldiers during an ambush in Segovia, Antioquia.180 However, on 18 September 2025, the first round of talks between the AGC and the government began in Doha (Qatar). Both parties agreed to engage a process of socio-juridical peace talks, with five piloting municipalities for peace implementation in Antioquia and Chocó, where the group is strongly present.181

The AGC has been recruiting former combatants of the FARC-EP, the ELN, as well as former military personnel182as fighters183 and instructors.184 It has also expanded corruption networks within the Armed Forces to prevent military actions, obtain intelligence, and detect informants.185

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  The systematic targeting and assassination of state security forces, often by offering a cash bounty for each killing. This strategy is used by illegal armed groups to terrorize law enforcement, assert territorial control, and retaliate against government offensives. Miami Herald, Wave of police killings in Colombia copies drug lord Pablo Escobar’s terror tactics, 6 May 2025, url

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