

3.2.2. Southern Bolívar

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Southern Bolívar is a strategic zone that connects Antioquia, Santander, Middle Magdalena River region, and Catatumbo, a strategic corridor for illegal armed groups for the exploitation and administration of illicit economies, particularly illegal mining[324] and coca production.[325] Main actors engaging in confrontations in Southern Bolívar include the AGC, ELN, and FARC dissidents; these actors seek to control the strategic corridor, as well as drug trafficking, illegal mining, and revenues from other illicit activities.[326] According to a report by the International Institute on Caribbean Studies, between 27 June and 7 August 2025, 22 armed confrontations were registered in southern Bolívar, leading to mass displacements and confinements.[327]

The Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that, between January and September 2025, 1 909 people were displaced, including 50 people (7 families) in Tiquiso, and 1 065 were confined across Bolívar department.[328] However, according to the Secretary of Public Safety of Bolívar, as of August 2025 there were over 7 000 families confined across the department, and teachers have been abandoning their posts in isolated areas due to the security situation and the lack of food staples.[329] In August 2025, Argentinian news source Infobae reported that, according to the Archbishop of Magangué, about 1500 families were in a situation of confinement in southern Bolívar due to constant bombardments and armed clashes among illegal armed groups and between these groups and the army, and the social control exerted by illegal armed actors.[330] The Archbishop also indicated that humanitarian assistance can only access the area it they obtain '“permits”' from illegal armed groups.[331]

On 4 November 2025, the ELN attacked a gold mine in the municipality of San Pablo, killing five people and causing the displacement of mining workers, as well as destroying the machinery, aggravating the economic crisis in the area.[332] On 3 September 2025, the ELN forced the population in San Agustín and Santo Domingo, municipality of Arenal, to abandon the area.[333] Additionally, the ELN is accused of planting anti-personnel mines in the area, further restricting freedom of movement and the ability of locals to harvest the land.[334]

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