

3.2.5. Pacific coastal areas of Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, and Chocó

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Chocó, that borders Panama,³⁶⁵ is a strategic area for the trafficking of drugs and arms³⁶⁶ and for the illegal mining exploitation, especially gold.³⁶⁷ Several illegal armed groups have presence in the area, including the ELN and AGC/Gulf Clan.³⁶⁸ Illegal armed actors have been increasing in Chocó, as well as armed confrontations among them in their dispute for control over territories.³⁶⁹ The Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that, between January and September 2025, over 18 900 people in Chocó were affected by confinement by illegal armed groups.³⁷⁰ The same source indicated that 2 927 people were displaced, with the municipalities most affected including Quibdó (74 people, 17 families), Nóvita (80 people, 20 families), Medio Atrato (197 people, 45 families), and Alto Baudó (81 people, 20 families).³⁷¹ The same source indicated that over 18 900 people were victims of confinement by illegal armed groups, particularly in the municipalities of Nuquí (1 293 people, 387 families), Sipí (1 223 people, 387 families), Alto Baudó (843 people, 248 families), and Almaguer (3 746 people, 1 860 families).³⁷²

Nariño is part of a strategic corridor that connects Colombia with Ecuador.³⁷³ It also has plenty of rivers and waterways that facilitate the transport of illicit goods and mobility of illegal armed groups.³⁷⁴ FARC dissident groups and the recently founded Self-Defence Forces of Nariño (Autodefensas Unidas de Nariño, AUN) are known to dispute strategic areas of Nariño,³⁷⁵ particularly Cumbitara, Los Andes, Tumaco, El Rosario, Samaniego, Ricaurte, Abades, Guambuyaco, and Piedemonte Costero.³⁷⁶ Pares reported that armed confrontations among illegal armed groups have led to displacements, forced disappearances, selective killings, and threats.³⁷⁷ The Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that, between January and September 2025, 5 090 people were displaced, and the municipalities most affected included Cumbitara (167 people, 84 families) and El Charco (1 937 people, 808 families).³⁷⁸ The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) reported that, between June and August 2025, 67 violent events were recorded in Nariño, including 35 attacks against civilians (661 people affected), 15 armed confrontations (9 affected), 9 instances of restrictions to the access of humanitarian assistance in affected areas (5 634 affected), and 6 forced displacement events (1 749 affected).³⁷⁹

In Cauca, armed groups disputing territory include FARC dissident groups and the ELN.³⁸⁰ Areas of dispute concentrate in northern and southern Cauca, in municipalities such as Balboa, Argelia, Santa Rosa, Macizo, Oriente, the Pacific coast, and Guapi Timbiquí.³⁸¹ Illegal armed groups reportedly employ exemplary violence such as torture, to prevent community opposition.³⁸² The Office of the Ombudsperson, however, noted that humanitarian emergencies also occur in

other municipalities, including Cajibío, Caldono, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, and others.³⁸³ In September 2025, the Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that armed actors engage in armed confrontations with other armed actors, using explosives and gas cylinders, often indiscriminately, and that they also impose social norms in the territories they control. This same source indicated further in a report released at the end of October 2025 that, even if the State and governmental forces have increased their presence in Cauca to mitigate the violence in 2025, the situation remains very difficult, with one in four cases of minor forced recruitment nationally occurring in Cauca between January and October 2025. As mentioned further in this report, Cauca is also the department where the most social leaders were assassinated so far in 2025.³⁸⁴

In Valle del Cauca, areas of dispute concentrate in Calima and Buenaventura.³⁸⁵ The Office of the Ombudsperson, however, noted that humanitarian emergencies also occur in other municipalities, including Ansermanuevo, Jamundí, San Pedro, Tuluá, and others.³⁸⁶ Illegal armed actors in Valle del Cauca include main armed groups like the ELN, FARC dissident groups, the AGC, and powerful regional organised crime gangs such as the Shottas and the Espartanos in Buenaventura or La Inmaculada in Tuluá.³⁸⁷ The Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that armed actors are disputing the control over the Garrapatas Canyon, engaging in armed confrontations with rival groups in rural areas and the outskirts of small towns.³⁸⁸

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