

4. Impact of the violence on civilians and human rights

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4.1. Conflict-related violence

4.1.1. Overview

Violence in conflict-affected regions remained a ‘grave concern’, and conflict dynamics vary considerably across the regions of Colombia, affecting populations in, amongst others, areas historically affected by violence.434 According to ACLED, the most common forms of violence in Colombia (January 2018-October 2025) were the targeting of civilians by armed groups (57 %), clashes between armed groups and state forces (23 %), clashes between armed groups (9 %), and 'other' unspecified reasons (11 %).435 ACLED reported that during Petro's term, Colombian civilian population has had increased exposure to violence, noting a 3 % increase in civilian fatalities from armed group violence.436 ACLED indicated in October 2025, that targeted civilians are 'increasingly political', noting that most of the violence that they recorded is against social leaders (678 events; 15 %) and JACs (211 events), farmers (especially in Cauca), and cattle ranchers (especially in Arauca and Cesar) (565 events), indigenous groups (470 events), labour groups (411 events), political figures (331 events), former FARC-EP combatants (166 events), Afro-Colombian ethnic groups (118 events).437 Armed groups are accused of committing serious abuses against civilians across the country,1110F438 including targeted killings, child recruitment, forced confinement of populations, mass displacement, the use of antipersonnel mines, and extortion, among others.439 Armed and criminal groups employ a wide range of social control strategies, including both direct violent actions—such as targeted killings, gender-based violence, recruitment of children and adolescents, and extortion systems—and indirect methods that influence community life, such as restricting movement and imposing behavioural norms. Together, these practices create a comprehensive system of domination that undermines state authority and uses the civilian population to consolidate territorial control.440 Civilians are frequently caught in the cross-fire between groups fighting for control over strategic areas, such as in January 2025, when 80 people were killed and thousands forced to flee in northeast Colombia due to failed peace negotiations and confrontations between ELN and FARC dissidents over coca-growing border regions.441 It was the ELN

offensive that led to a suspension of peace talks, not the other way around.[442]

According to ACLED, during 2023-2024, the most acute violence targeting civilians occurred within the territories where there is high competition between armed groups, notably Arauca, Putumayo, Chocó, and Antioquia. There were significant increases in civilian victims of explosive events, forced displacement, confinement, and recruitment.[443] They describe the evolution of violence targeting civilians in the past several years as 'less deadly, but more pervasive'.[444] ACLED reported that there have been 18 200 'violent events' in Colombia between 1 January 2018 and 24 October 2025, with roughly 14 600 reported fatalities from these events. They additionally report 11 200 'violent events targeting civilians', with 10 300 reported fatalities from these events.[445] ACLED provides a graphic on the most common types of violence as well as a map indicating the locations where its data recorded the highest civilian targeting incidents in 2023 and 2024. [446]

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Figure 6: ACLED data on most common forms of violence in Colombia 1 January 2018 - 24 October 2025[447]

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Figure 7: ACLED data on violence targeting civilians (2023-2024)[448]

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  UNVMC, Report of the Secretary General, 27 June 2025, url, paras. 7, 34

- [435]

  ACLED, Data on political violence and demonstrations in Colombia, October 2025. Unpublished information provided to EUAA.

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  ACLED, Data on political violence and demonstrations in Colombia, October 2025. Unpublished information provided to EUAA.

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  ACLED, Data on political violence and demonstrations in Colombia, October 2025. Unpublished information provided to EUAA.

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  HRW, World Report 2025 – Colombia, 16 January 2025, url

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Colombia, Defensoría del Pueblo, Diagnóstico de derechos humanos en Colombia, 10 December 2024, url, pp. 11-13; UNVMC, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 December 2024, url, paras. 13, 40, 42, 76

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  AP, At least 80 people killed in northeast Colombia as peace talks fail, official says, 20 January 2025, url

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  ACLED, Data on political violence and demonstrations in Colombia, October 2025. Unpublished information provided to EUAA.

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