4.1.4. Kidnapping

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The Human Rights Observatory of the Ministry of Defense reported that there has been an increasing trend in the total number of kidnappings (including for extortion) between 2021-2025, with cases rising from 160 in 2021, to 338 in 2023, and rising sharply to 406 between January and September 2025.472 Kidnapping for ransom is usually linked to extortion; they are a source of revenue and a means of territorial control for armed groups; and although the rates for this fell between 2015 and 2021, during 2022-2024, they rose again to levels not seen since 2013; however, rates still remain much lower than in previous periods during the conflict.473 The National Police's Unified Action Groups for Personal Freedom (Grupos de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal, GAULA) also reported a 50 % increase in kidnappings during 2023, listing FARC dissidents led by Iván Mordisco, and the ELN conducting most of the kidnappings.474 Similarly, the Human Rights Observatory of the Ministry of Defence reported an increase from 80 cases of extortive kidnapping in 2020, to 221 cases in 2023, and 285 cases in the first half of 2025 (January to September).475 Extortion and score-setting are often the main motives for kidnapping.476 Extortion kidnapping are also used as a method to enforce governance by armed and illegal groups, with ACLED reporting a 126 % increase in kidnappings during the first 38 months of Petro's presidency, one in five of which involves the ELN.477 Below ACLED provides a graphic showing the increase in kidnappings since Petro took office:

> Imported image pandoc_image_10.png
>
> Figure 11: Kidnappings by armed groups (May 2019-October 2025)478

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  Colombia, Seguimiento a indicadores y resultados operacionales (16 October 2025), September 2025, url

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  US, CRS, Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations, 30 May 2025, url, p. 7

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  Infobae, Secuestros en Colombia aumentaron en un 50%, según el Gaula de la Policía, 13 December 2023, url

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  Colombia, Seguimiento a indicadores y resultados operacionales (16 October 2025), September 2025, url

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  Infobae, Secuestros en Colombia aumentaron en un 50%, según el Gaula de la Policía, 13 December 2023, url; Pares, Radiografía de la extorsión: el principal desafío de la seguridad ciudadana, March 2024, url, p. 7

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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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