

4.1.5. Extortion

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Extortion has risen significantly in recent years.⁴⁸⁰ There were 11 078 cases of extortion reported to police in 2023,⁴⁸¹ 13 869 reported cases of extortion in 2024,⁴⁸² and 8 844 cases as of 30 September 2025.⁴⁸³ The Ministry of Defence similarly reported a rise in cases since 2020, noting that there have been 8 805 cases reported between January and September 2025:⁴⁸⁴

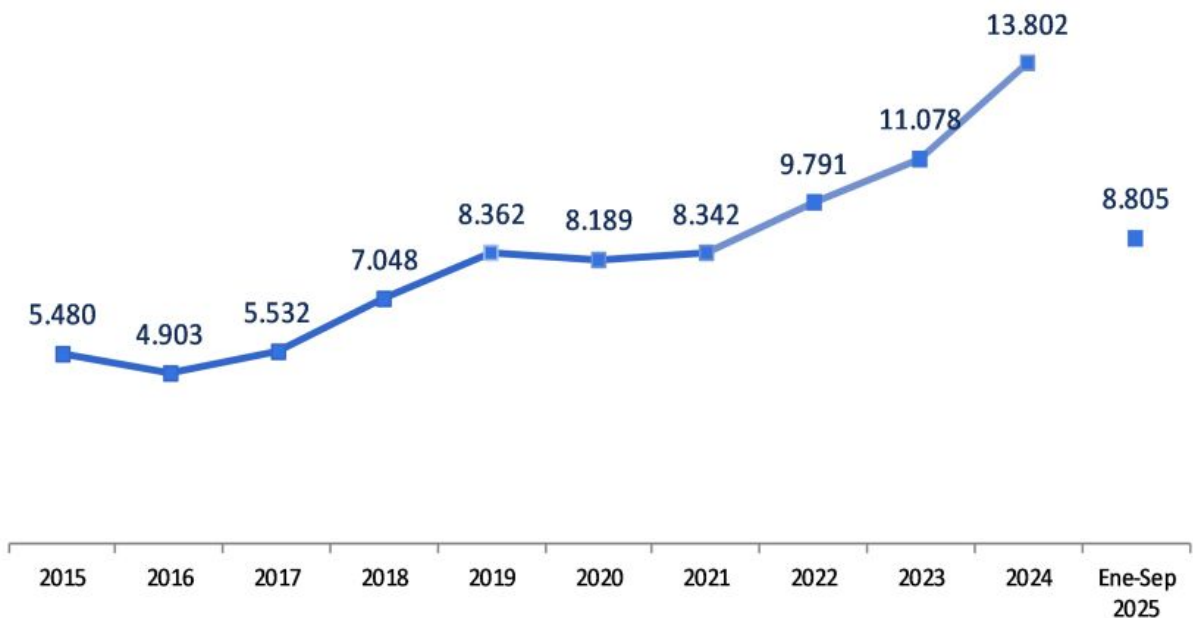


Figure 12: Extortion cases 2015-2025⁴⁸⁵

Extortion has continued to increase in the past few years as armed and criminal groups use it as a means of income and control over the local population, often in competition with one another for dominance over territory.⁴⁸⁶ Extortion is both a criminal tactic (to control areas rich in resources such as coca, minerals, etc.,⁴⁸⁷ and secure commodities⁴⁸⁸ and illicit economy transportation corridors), and a tool for social and territorial governance by armed groups, especially in rural areas; in cities, is often linked to organised crime.⁴⁸⁹ It has increasingly become a key source of revenue for illegal armed groups.⁴⁹⁰ It has proliferated due to outsourcing by larger criminal and armed groups to local gangs,⁴⁹¹ loss of income from cocaine revenue, and due to it being less risky than other illegal activities such as drug trafficking.⁴⁹²

Extortion, together with kidnapping, and other tactics, can be used by armed and criminal groups to enforce governance over local populations.⁴⁹³

The most affected areas are those where there is little state presence, high poverty, and significant natural resources, especially in the Andean region: Antioquia, Chocó, Caldas, Quindío, Risaralda, Cundinamarca, Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño; in the Caribbean coast: Atlántico, Bolívar; at the Venezuelan border: Norte de Santander; and the urban centres: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Buenaventura, Quibdó, Cartagena, Barranquilla, and Cúcuta.[494](#)

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