

4.2.4. Abuses and extra-judicial killings by state actors

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Between 2002 and 2008, Colombia's military committed at least 6 402 extrajudicial killings[612] as commanders were under pressure to produce enemy casualties; these 'false positives' were often young men from poor neighbourhoods who were lured from their homes and were killed, dressed as enemy combatants, and presented as rebels killed in action. The Courts in Colombia had previously ordered the government to apologise for such killings, but under Presidents Santos and Duque, no apologies were forthcoming. In 2023, the Petro government issued a public apology for the extrajudicial killings of 19 individuals killed between 2004 and 2008, who were 'false positives'.[613] In 2025, the JEP indicted four Generals and 35 Non-commissioned officers for war crimes and crimes against humanity for 442 false positive cases that occurred in Antioquia between 2004 and 2007, including for the use of torture.[614]

Sources indicate that since Petro took office, the number of reported abuses by public security forces has declined; though abuses still occur,[615] impunity for past abuses was a problem and reforms to prevent repetition were limited.[616] OHCHR received 36 allegations of human rights violations by members of the security forces in 2023, and verified 18, which were referred to the Ministry of Defence for investigation. These violations included torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, gender-based violence, sexual violence, threats to personal integrity, arbitrary detention, and discrimination. There were also cases reported of corruption and collusion between members of the security forces and criminal and illegal armed groups.[617]

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  Caracol, Por primera vez la JEP confirma actos de tortura en casos de falsos positivos, 19 February 2025, url

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