



SECURITY
COLOMBIA

Security Overview

MEDELLÍN

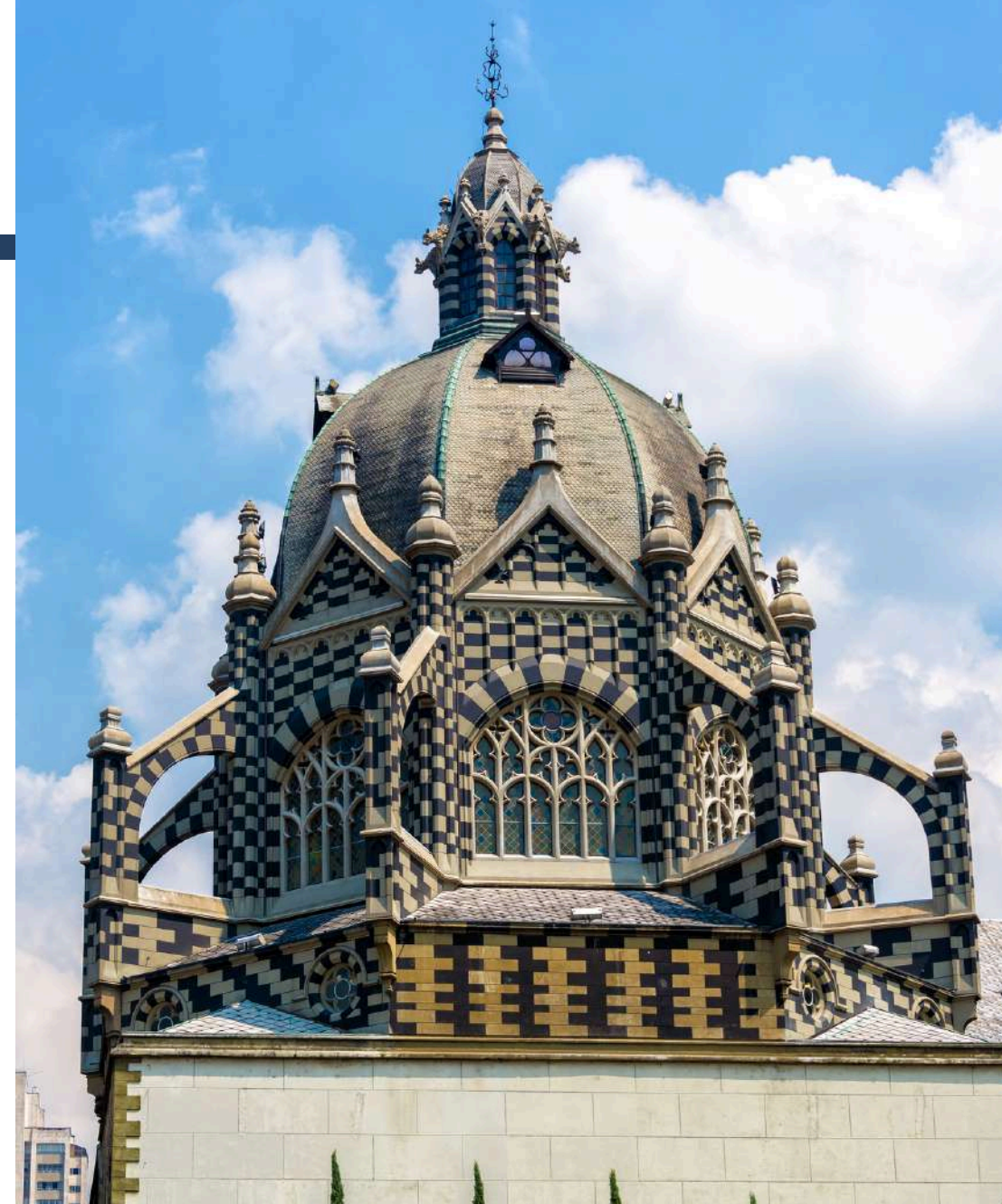
July 2024

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“ The Medellín Security-Overview 2024 aims to carry out a statistically based analysis of the security situation in the Colombian city in order to build prospective scenarios.

”



1. Situational Analysis

In this document the Unidad de Análisis Político y Seguridad Corporativa (UAPSC) of 3+SC will carry out a Security Overview for the city of Medellín, analyzing the dynamics that impact security, risk generating factors and criminal behavior based on statistics, with the main objective of making known the security situation of the city in order to establish prospective scenarios and recommendations that are useful for risk management, treatment and control.

According to institutional statistics, during the first half of 2024 most high-impact crimes have seen a reduction in Medellín. Despite this, the structural problems that cause crimes to materialize persist in the city, so the decrease in reported crimes does not necessarily reflect a satisfactory picture.

The information gathered this year is framed within the framework of the arrival of Federico Gutiérrez as mayor, who since his candidacy has taken as a banner the recovery of security in the territory. Since his arrival in January, Gutiérrez has focused on reinforcing law enforcement operations, intensifying arrests and detentions, while concentrating on recovering public space.

Although the figures indicate that the measures implemented by the local government have been effective, the reality of the situation remains complex. Sexual exploitation, the recruitment of minors, the proliferation of criminal structures, poverty and micro-trafficking are interrelated phenomena that are currently very important problems for Medellín.



42%

of citizens stated that they feel safe in the city

18%

of survey participants reported having been victims of some type of crime.

The southeast of the city, specifically the commune El Poblado, is the area with the highest perception of insecurity

Among the most serious problems in the neighborhoods of Medellín are:

36%

drug addiction

28%

street muggings

20%

drug trafficking



2. Crime Analysis

High-impact crimes in Medellín 2024

Based on figures provided by the National Police, it is possible to show that between January and May 2024, only two high impact crimes experienced an increase.

105%
increase in threats

16%
increase in carjacking

CRIME STATISTICS IN MEDELLÍN	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023	VARIATION % 2022 VS 2023	JAN-MAY 2023	JAN-MAY 2024	VARIATION % JAN-MAY 2023 VS 2024
Homicides	358	358	0%	141	113	-20%
Theft from persons	28685	30953	8%	13302	10757	-19%
Extortion	672	894	33%	457	349	-24%
Kidnapping	10	17	70%	9	2	-78%
Threats	1711	1497	-12%	624	1280	105%
Terrorism	3	0	-100%	0	0	0%
Residential theft	1679	1673	-1%	756	660	-13%
Carjacking	1032	976	-5%	423	491	16%
Motorcycle theft	5926	6201	5%	2716	2565	-5%
Retail theft	3949	2776	-30%	1540	800	-48%
Total	44025	45345	3%	19.968	17017	-15%

Resource: Own elaboration with information from the National Police.
Note: Figures subject to change based on updating processes of the source.

10757
thefts from
persons in 2024

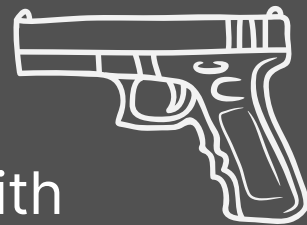
6625

were committed
without the use of
weapons



1886

were committed with
firearms



1524

were committed with
a sharp weapon.



2.1 Theft from persons

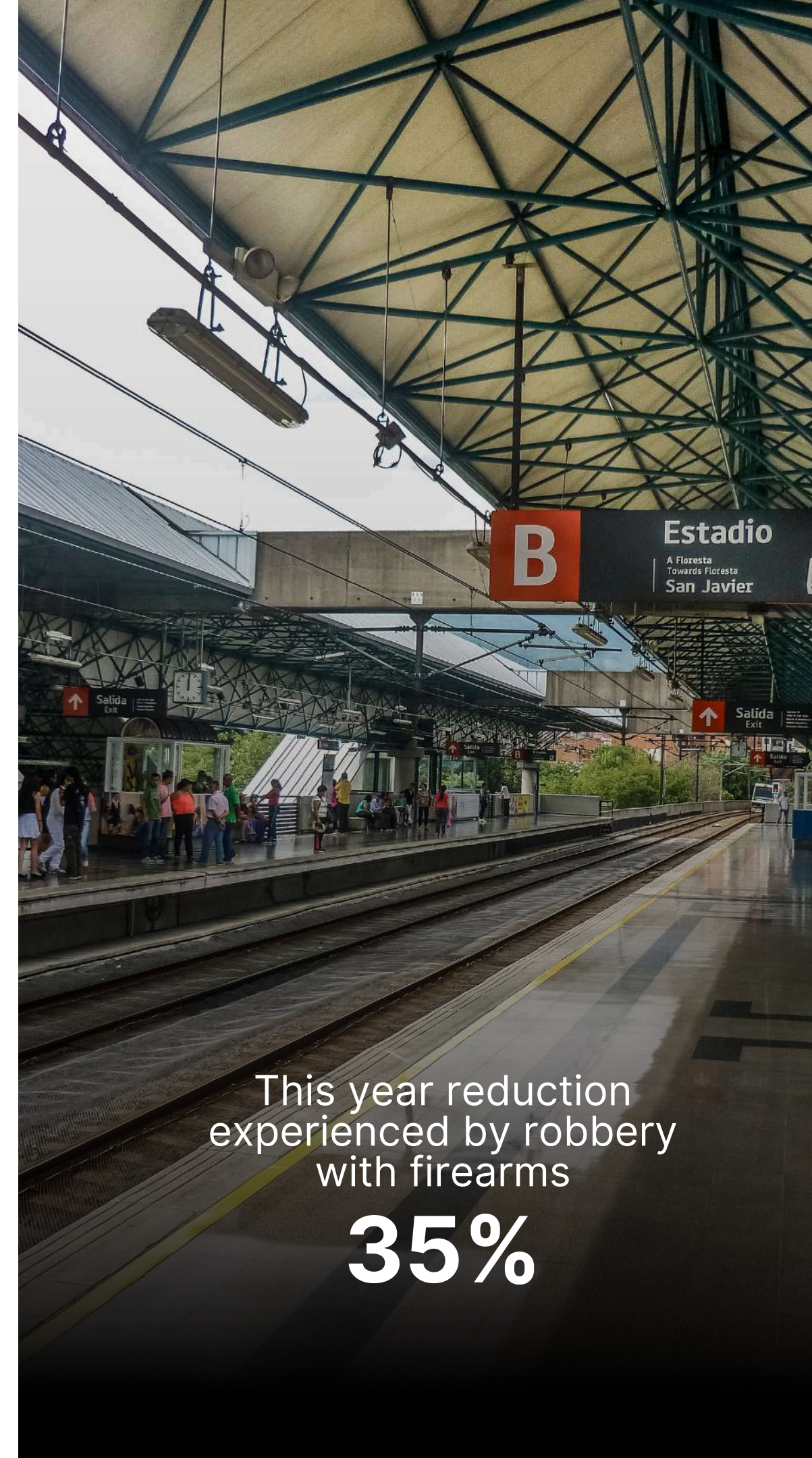
In the first four months of 2024, Medellín experienced a reduction in most high-impact crimes, including theft from persons. Despite the decrease, theft from persons continues to be one of the highest impact crimes in Medellín.

Citizen dissatisfaction with this problem has reached such a point that vigilante justice has become a recurring theme ([Telemedellín](#), 2024). Downtown is the place with the most reported cases of theft from persons, followed by El Poblado and Laureles ([Alerta Paisa](#), 2024).

Particularly in Avenida Oriental, San Juan and Villanueva, sectors located in the center of Medellín, merchants have demanded greater presence on the part of the authorities. According to the police, the peak times for shoplifting are the morning and afternoon rush hours ([Telemedellín](#), 2024).

This year reduction
experienced by robbery
with firearms

35%



2.2 Theft in different modalities

In addition to theft from persons, there are different types of theft in Medellín, such as retail theft, residential theft, carjacking and motorcycle theft. These high-impact crimes affect the security of the citizens as they damage people's assets.

Despite the general decrease in thefts, carjacking continues to be a high impact problem in the capital of Antioquia. In April, authorities found approximately 10 stolen vehicles in a warehouse located in a shopping center in El Poblado.

According to investigations, the scandal was a new type of scam, in which the victim delivers the vehicle to a false dealership to be sold from Bogotá, and the criminals transport it to Medellín where they invent excuses not to return it or pay the affected person ([El País](#), 2024). Likewise, in June, the Police captured six people involved in the theft of four vehicles in the west of Medellín, apparently these were going to be used for the creation of car bombs ([El Colombiano](#), 2024).

Crime variation 2023 vs. 2024



Complaints between january and may:



2.3 Homicides

According to institutional statistics, homicides have decreased considerably in Medellín so far this year.

The capital of Antioquia registered a rate of 11 cases per 100.000 inhabitants, a figure lower than the national average ([El Tiempo](#), 2024). In addition, preliminary information from the security forces indicates that 17 homicides were registered in June, which shows a 41% drop compared to the same period in 2023 ([Alcaldía de Medellín](#), 2024).

According to the Sistema de Información para la Seguridad y la Convivencia (SISC), non-consecutive days without homicides have also seen a notable improvement, going from 69 in 2023 to 84. According to the Mayor of Medellín, Federico Gutiérrez, the panorama responds in large part to “the articulated work and the security strategies implemented by the District Administration” ([El Colombiano](#), 2024).

However, experts assure that the urban peace dialogues with the heads of criminal organizations in the Valle de Aburrá have also had a great impact on security in the Antioquian city ([El Tiempo](#), 2024).

Dynamics of homicide crime in the city



0%

Variation homicides
2022 vs. 2023



-20%

Variation january-may
2023 vs. January-may
2024



113

Homicides in 2024



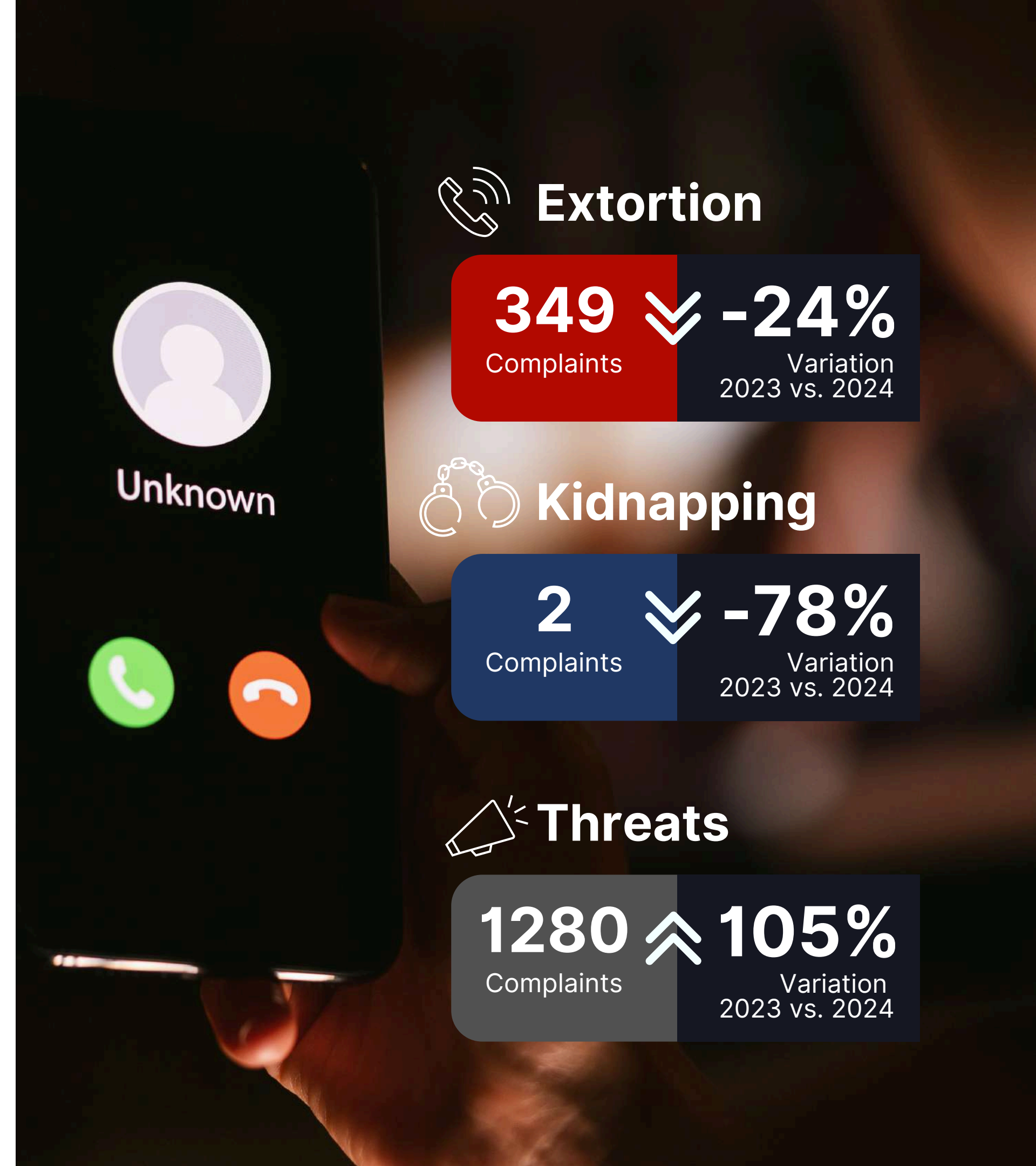
2.4 Extortion, threats and kidnapping

Threats are the crime with the highest percentage increase in the last year in Medellín.

Social leaders in the city are one of the populations most affected by this problem. Between January 1 and June 17, 20 social leaders had requested protection from the authorities due to recurrent threats against them ([El Colombiano](#), 2024).

A crime closely linked to the threat is extortion, which despite having seen a decrease in 2024, continues to be a major problem in the capital of Antioquia. Extortion is a financing tool for criminal structures that permeates education, commerce and infrastructure through “vaccines” ([Alerta Paisa](#), 2024).

With respect to kidnapping, the crime has experienced a notable decrease. However, cases have been registered against workers of private transport applications. In April, two drivers were rescued by authorities from a kidnapping attempt ([El Colombiano](#), 2024).



3. Risk Generating Factors

3.1 Micro-trafficking and criminal groups

SEIZED DRUG	YEAR 2022 (Kg)	YEAR 2023 (Kg)	JAN-MAY 2024 (Kg)
Ecstasy-Type Stimulants	24,232	19,969.60	10,362.00
2CB	9,333.50	7,805	3,777.90
LSD	2,762	603.7	3,714
Pressed Marijuana	2,801.07	5,410.49	3,140.16
Paste / Cocaine Base	115.12	198.59	66.6
Cocaine Hydrochloride	287.76	599.67	57.47
Total general	39,531.45	34,587.05	21,118.13

Resource: Own elaboration with information from the Observatorio de Drogas de Colombia, 2024.

Note: Figures subject to change based on updating processes of the source.

Distribution of GDO and GDCO in the city of Medellín

Criminal groups in Medellín have been the main articulators of micro-trafficking in the city. This illicit income has been one of the most lucrative for the organizations, which is why it has remained part of the criminal dynamics over time. This situation has generated high levels of violence in the neighborhoods, as it causes the existence of “invisible borders” between gangs to define who has the power to commit crimes in a given territory.

In April 2023, a truce was signed between the city's main criminal gangs and the government to set up a dialogue and urban peace table in the Itagüí prison. This has brought a certain calm and tranquility to Medellín, as territorial disputes and “settling of scores” have been reduced and are no longer the work of criminal organizations such as “La Oficina” or “La Terraza”, but of GAO cells present in the city. The environment has been affected at times by attacks on the negotiators of the different organizations, as well as by confrontations between smaller groups seeking to position themselves in illicit rents such as extortion or street robbery ([El Espectador, 2024](#)).

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Organized Criminal Groups (GDO)

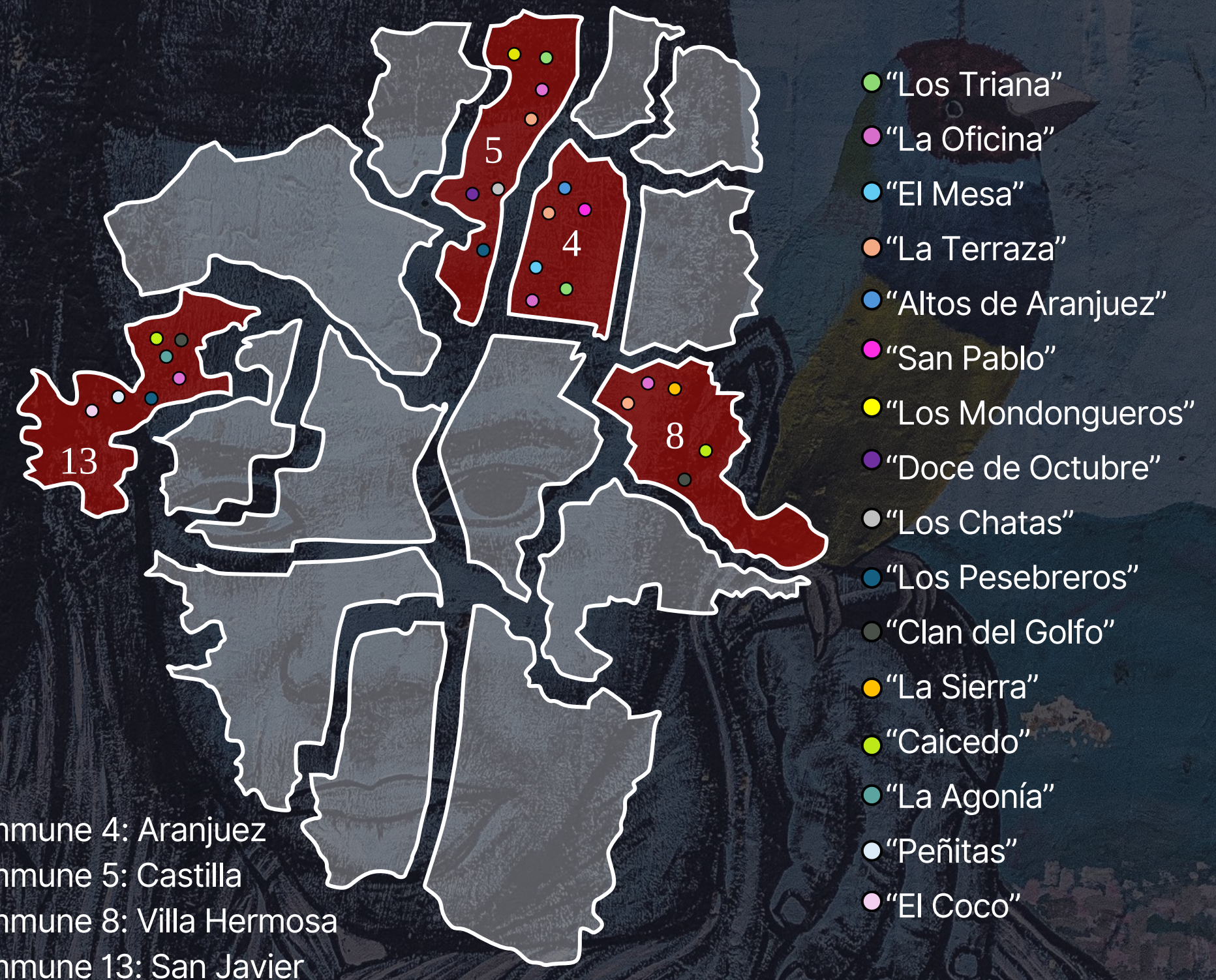
23

Common Organized Criminal Groups (GDCO)

1

Organized Armed Group (GAO): Clan del Golfo

Communes with the highest presence of criminal organizations in Medellín



Resource: Own elaboration with information from Pares, 2024.

3.2 Extortion



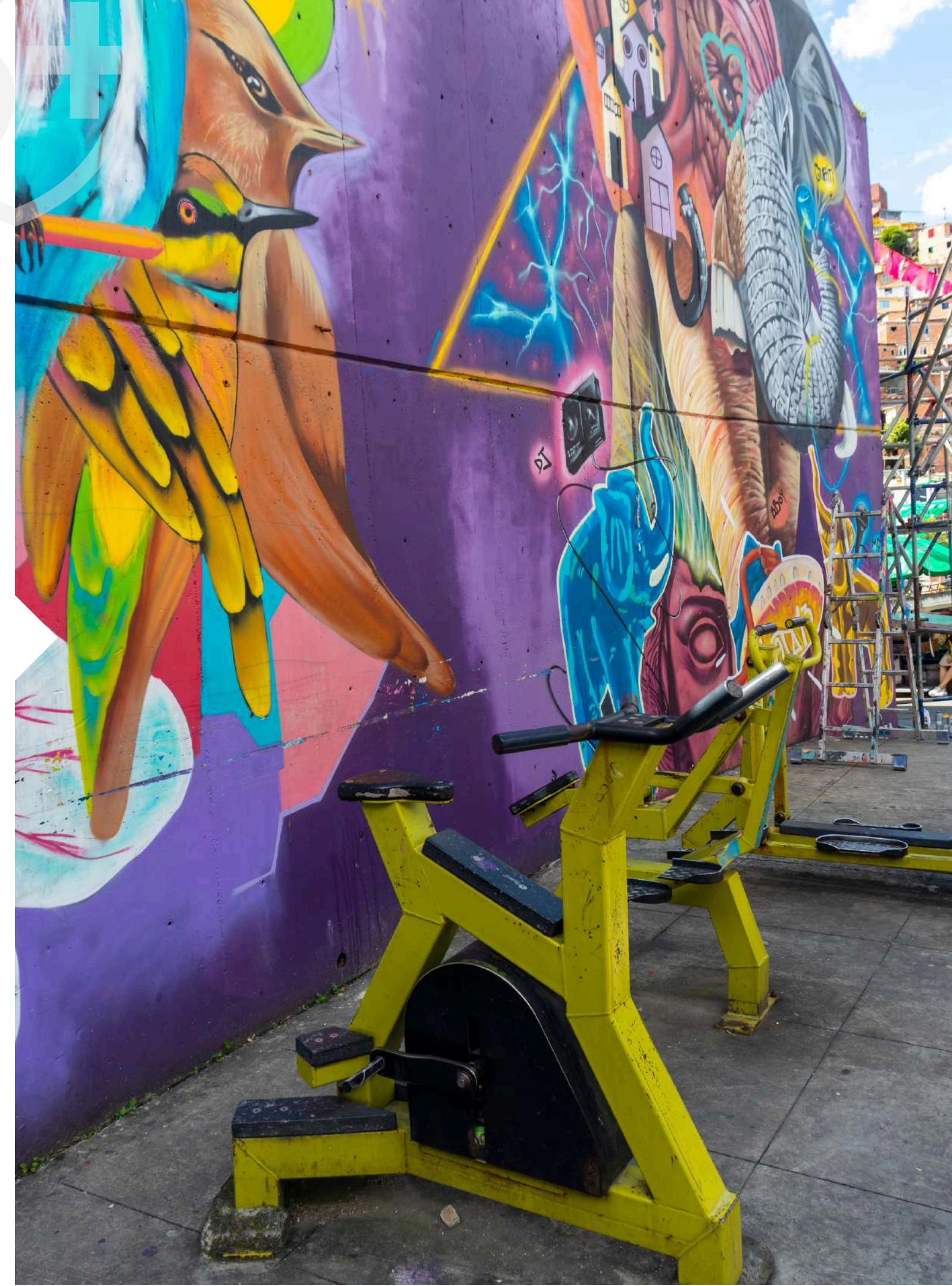
Although police data show a decrease in extortion cases in Medellín, the phenomenon continues to be a high-impact crime in the city. In the last year, Antioquia has been the department with the highest number of cases of this crime, and Medellín the second city with the most cases at the national level ([Teleantioquia, 2024](#)).

Organized criminal groups such as “Los Triana”, “La Terraza”, “Doce de Octubre”, “El Pesebre” and “Picacho” are responsible for this situation. This crime constitutes one of the strongest criminal rents, leaving profits of up to 100 million pesos per year ([El Colombiano, 2024](#)).

Through extortion, these structures not only finance themselves, but also exercise social and territorial control. Both homes and businesses are victims of this problem, although the most affected are merchants. Currently, more than 150.000 homes and businesses pay “vacuna” in Medellín ([El Colombiano, 2024](#)).

Communes most affected: Santa Cruz (Villa Niza sector), San Javier, La Candelaria (Villa station), Aranjuez, Belén, Laureles, Robledo and Buenos Aires.

According to the authorities, 40% of extortion comes from prisons and the rest is carried out in the streets



3.3 Instrumentalization and recruitment of minors

The exploitation of minors and sexual exploitation are issues that in recent months have drawn the attention of the media and citizens to the capital of Antioquia. Although for more than a decade the city was already recognized as a destination for “sex tourism”, in recent months the idea has been reinforced after a network of foreign pedophiles who traveled to Medellín to have sex with minors was identified.

What happened in the first semester of 2024 intensified law enforcement operations in the city. Thanks to this, Metropolitan Police investigators were able to “connect the criminal network that adds drug trafficking, contract killings, gangs dedicated to robbery and human trafficking to sexual exploitation, with foreign exploiters and powerful organizations. A multinational of criminals. Among the most problematic spots are Parque Lleras, Parque Berrio, Provenza, 70 in Laureles and 45 ([El Tiempo](#), 2024). Likewise, the phenomenon is deeply linked to a structural social problem, which is why the poorest communities are also those with the highest rates of recruitment and exploitation.



The recruitment communities identified in Medellín are 5, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16



171%

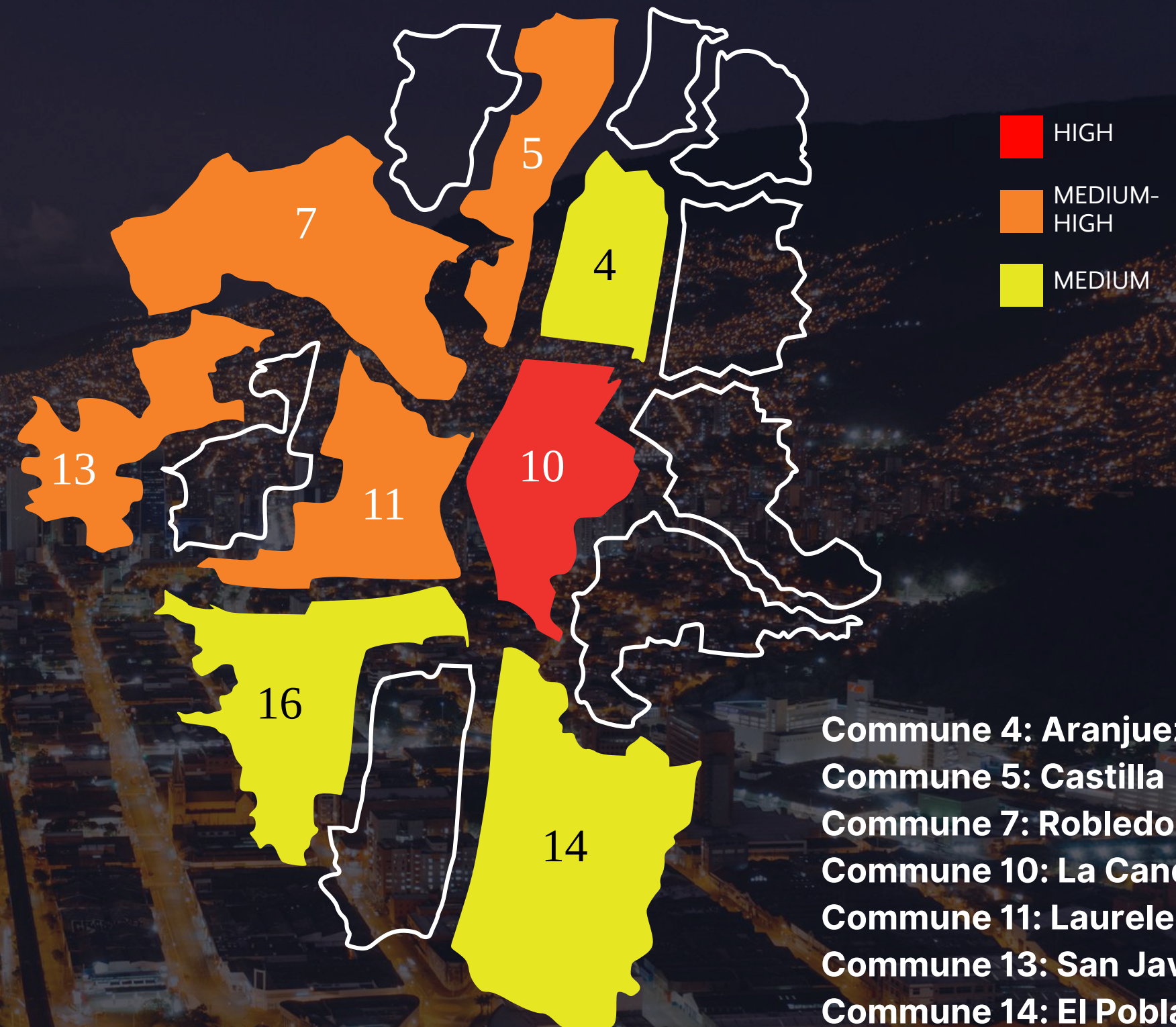
Increase in arrests for sexual exploitation of minors in Medellín during 2024

4. Risk Level

Medellín map




City risk level

The objective of the risk level analysis is to identify the areas where, according to institutional statistics, there is a greater possibility of violence and high-impact crimes occurring. In the case of this Medellín Security Overview, the characterization will be based on the security and crime statistics of the Información para la Seguridad y la Convivencia (SISC) of the Alcaldía de Medellín. The most problematic areas of the city will then be identified through two indicators: homicide and theft from persons.



- Commune 4: Aranjuez**
- Commune 5: Castilla**
- Commune 7: Robledo**
- Commune 10: La Candelaria**
- Commune 11: Laureles**
- Commune 13: San Javier**
- Commune 14: El Poblado**
- Commune 16: Belén**

Analysis of the dynamics of risks in the city of Cali so that companies can evaluate their operations (qualification based on ISO 31000 and quantitative risk analysis).

Risk	Main factors that generate risk	Consequences	Implications for private companies	Risk Level
 <p>Deterioration in the security situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment. • Consolidated presence of groups such as common crime, gangs, organized groups. • Influence of the micro-trafficking phenomenon in common and organized crime, developing networks of hired killings and their strengthening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen distrust • Decrease in local and foreign investment in the city. • Affectation of small and medium-sized businesses. • Decrease in tourism potential. • Increase in complaints of extortion, threats and homicides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on the supply or value chain due to the permeability of crime. • Non-fulfillment of services or commitments. • Leakage of personnel with intentions of harming companies. • Fear of market expansion due to criminal networks. 	High
 <p>Impact on the economic and financial system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption in the public and private sector. • Increasing poverty and inequality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in foreign investment in the city. • Low wages. • Labor informality. • Inflation. • Limitation and inadequate use of public space. • Low business generation. • Increased recruitment of criminal groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced demand for services and products. • Decrease in revenues. • Increased costs due to phenomena such as inflation. • Limitation of operating capacities. 	Medium-High
 <p>Political instability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption. • Deepening inequalities. • Mistrust in institutions. • Main factors that generate risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polarization. • Social conflict. • Strengthening and increase of organized groups. • Low productivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in foreign clients due to political uncertainty. • Reduced revenues due to periods of inflation and recession. • Uncertainty in creating long-term plans and projects. 	Medium

5. Foresight Design



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During the first half of 2024, most of the high-impact crime figures recorded by the National Police decreased in Medellín.

As has already been mentioned, the reduction in crime has occurred under the mandate of Mayor Federico Gutiérrez, who has focused his efforts on improving and accentuating the operability of the security forces in the city.

Despite the favorable outlook, in recent months Medellín has also been the scene of major problems, such as the sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking and insecurity affecting tourists in the city.

The above has led the mayor to take highly mediatic actions such as the prohibition of prostitution.

Although the reductions in crime cases should be recognized, since they indicate a favorable trend, it cannot be ignored that the problems that affect Medellín most today are the result of long-standing structural phenomena.

“

For the city to see a true and lasting improvement, comprehensive work by the competent authorities is necessary.

The trafficking and sexual exploitation of people, including children and young people, although it has worsened in recent years, is not a recent problem.

Currently, because of certain criminal dynamics, Medellín is seen as a destination for “sex tourism”, a problematic term linked to human trafficking and the exploitation of minors.

Foreigners of different origins pay for tourist plans in the capital of Antioquia operated by transnational criminal organizations.

Micro-trafficking, trafficking and the exploitation of minors are just some of the crimes that generate income for these illegal structures.

In order for the city to see a real and lasting improvement, it is necessary for the competent authorities to work comprehensively.

On the one hand, there must be strategies that go beyond operations, arrests and seizures; the social component is essential, policies that promote the construction of opportunities and life projects for citizens.

On the other hand, local and national authorities must work jointly and in coordination with each other, but also with international actors, in order to mitigate the actions of organized crime.

6. Recomendaciones

- 1** Always maintain a high degree of situational awareness, which allows you to identify risks or threats derived from situations external to the place or areas where you travel.
- 2** Taking into account the description of the Risk Level provided in this document, identify the districts with a high risk level in the city. This in order to avoid traveling through them or to provide safety and self-care plans.
- 3** In case of traveling by means of a private vehicle, make a route analysis and have alternate routes that will allow you to resolve new developments on the route.
- 4** Do not travel or travel late at night in neighborhoods or districts that, according to this document, have registered some type of criminal phenomenon or show high levels of interference by criminal actors, for example, the districts of La Candelaria, Castilla and San Javier.
- 5** For the displacement of expatriates or foreigners within Medellin, consider the probability of having systems to monitor their movements remotely from a Command Center.
- 6** If you are going out to night entertainment centers, do not go out alone and always keep an eye on your drink or food. Criminals take advantage of these spaces to supply their victims with shotguns.
- 7** If you are in crowded places such as restaurants, shopping malls or bars, always keep a close eye on your personal belongings and avoid engaging in conversations with people who suddenly ask for favors or want to approach you.
- 8** Do not go out with strangers or people you recently met through social networks or da-ting apps. Criminals use these platforms to carry out express kidnappings and rob their victims.
- 9** Avoid having detailed or sensitive information about your family members, as well as the organization you work for, on your cell phone.
- 10** Be careful with the information you publish through your social networks, taking into account that the less privacy you have, the less your work and personal data, as well as those of your family members, will be exposed on the network, which can lend itself to extortion or kidnapping processes.
- 11** If you are a victim of telephone extortion, do not hang up, try to take notes, do not give your name or ID number and, if possible, record the call.
- 12** If you are a victim of threats in any of its modalities, contact the authorities immediately and do not give in to the requests of the offender.
- 13** If possible, train yourself in defensive and evasive driving to increase your ability to save your life or that of your family in the event of an assault on public roads.
- 14** If you are in a highly vulnerable situation and are likely to be a victim of robbery, mugging or carjacking, do not put up any resistance.





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