



Editorial

POLITICAL ANALYSIS AND CORPORATE SECURITY UNIT

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Regional elections in Germany: What could the victory of the far-right AfD party mean for Europe?

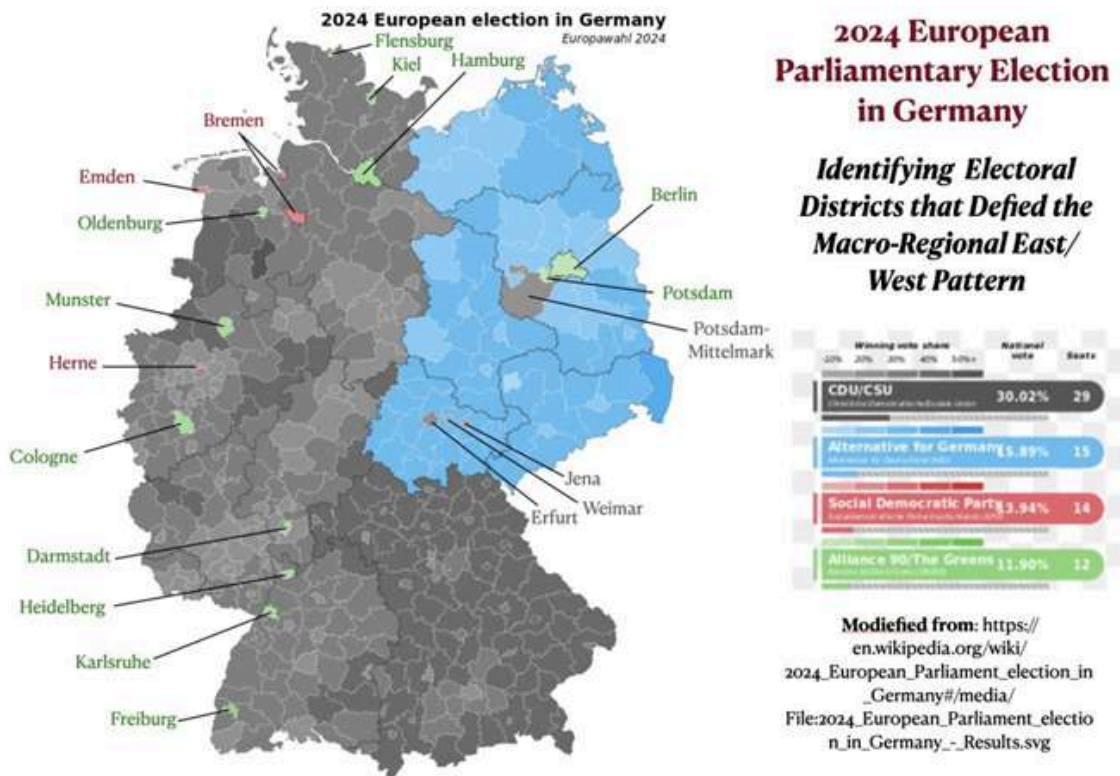
On September 1st, the elections for the parliament of the state of Thuringia, in eastern Germany, were held. The elections were historic due to the victory of the AfD or Alternative for Germany party, with 32.8% of the seats, being the first time since 1949 that a party considered extreme right-wing has won an election of this magnitude. In second place was the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party of Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who with these results may find himself in trouble with the other parties of the coalition governing the European country. Through a discourse focused on limiting immigration to the country, Euroscepticism and German nationalism, the AfD has managed to have in the territories of the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) its majority voter base. Similarly, in the neighboring state of Saxony the AfD managed to take second place in the local parliament with just over 30% of the seats, behind the CDU, consolidating its power in East Germany ([Al Jazeera](#), 2024). This new resurgence of the extreme right in Germany raises many questions regarding the future of the country's relations and conflicts on the continent.

The regional results maintain a continuity with the European Parliament elections that took place in June, since on that occasion the AfD managed to obtain 15.9% of the votes, with a special reception in the East ([Le Monde](#), 2024). These kinds of results show how migration and economic policies may be failing the moderate right-wing coalition party, as a significant part of the German population is opting for more extreme exits. milarly, it could be argued that the Scholz government has failed to provide answers to the migration crises coming from the Middle East and Africa, thus giving space to the extreme right in the political spotlight.



A recent event has brought the issue of immigration in Germany back to the center of the national debate, when in the city of Solingen a 26-year-old Syrian man, who had arrived as a refugee, carried out a massive knife attack in the city's main square. Following the arrest of the subject, the attack was attributed to the Islamic State. In the aftermath of these events, the government began to enact stricter laws on the carrying of knives and sharp weapons, as well as regulations to directly deport people who commit violent crimes (Le Monde, 2024).

Electoral map of Germany for the 2024 European Parliament (in blue the districts that voted for the AfD, in gray the districts that voted for the CDU)



Resource: GeoCurrents, 2024



A curious fact for political observers in Germany and Europe is that the far-left Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) obtained third places in Saxony and Thuringia, just behind the AfD and the CDU, thus positioning itself as the third political force in these German states. What is particular is that despite the apparent programmatic dissonance with AfD because of their places in the political spectrum, both coincide on such sensitive issues as immigration or Euroscepticism. In addition, the BSW has also advocated ending war and economic aid to Ukraine, arguing that German tax dollars should not support war efforts from abroad, but rather fix the problems afflicting Germany. This line of social conservatism and economic progressivism appeals to a population nostalgic for the former communist regime in East Germany, who believe that their region began to deteriorate with reunification in 1989, and that much of the problem lies in the massive influx of migrants into the country ([BBC](#), 2024). These voting trends demonstrate how nationalist and socially conservative ideas can have great momentum in this sector of Germany.

The regional election results in Germany demonstrate how public opinion in Europe is moving, and from this it is possible to make medium-term forecasts for the European continent. The victory of the AfD in Saxony and Thuringia comes in continuity with the first round victory of extreme right-wing parties in France for the European Parliament legislature in June, similar to what happened with the same AfD in eastern Germany for these same elections. The above could suggest that anti-immigration, nationalism and populism ideas are becoming more widespread in Europe, which may increase social conflicts and result in mass riots or demonstrations. In the coming weeks, parliamentary elections will be held in the eastern state of Brandenburg, and according to polls conducted by relevant media in Germany, the results could be similar to those in Thuringia where the AfD won the majority of seats, thus consolidating a great power of influence in eastern Germany ([NPR](#), 2024). As for the European panorama, the tendency of these parties throughout the continent is to distrust the European Union and in extreme cases to want to separate from it, so it is right to think that if this political current continues to grow, Europe's joint effort against crises such as the war in Ukraine could be affected, and therefore Putin's regime could find space to continue with its warlike actions. On the other hand, it should be clarified that most of the parties in Germany have announced that they will not form coalitions with the AfD or the BSW due to their nationalist and extremist character, so it remains to be seen how they will be able to maneuver in the political scenario after obtaining victories with the electorate.



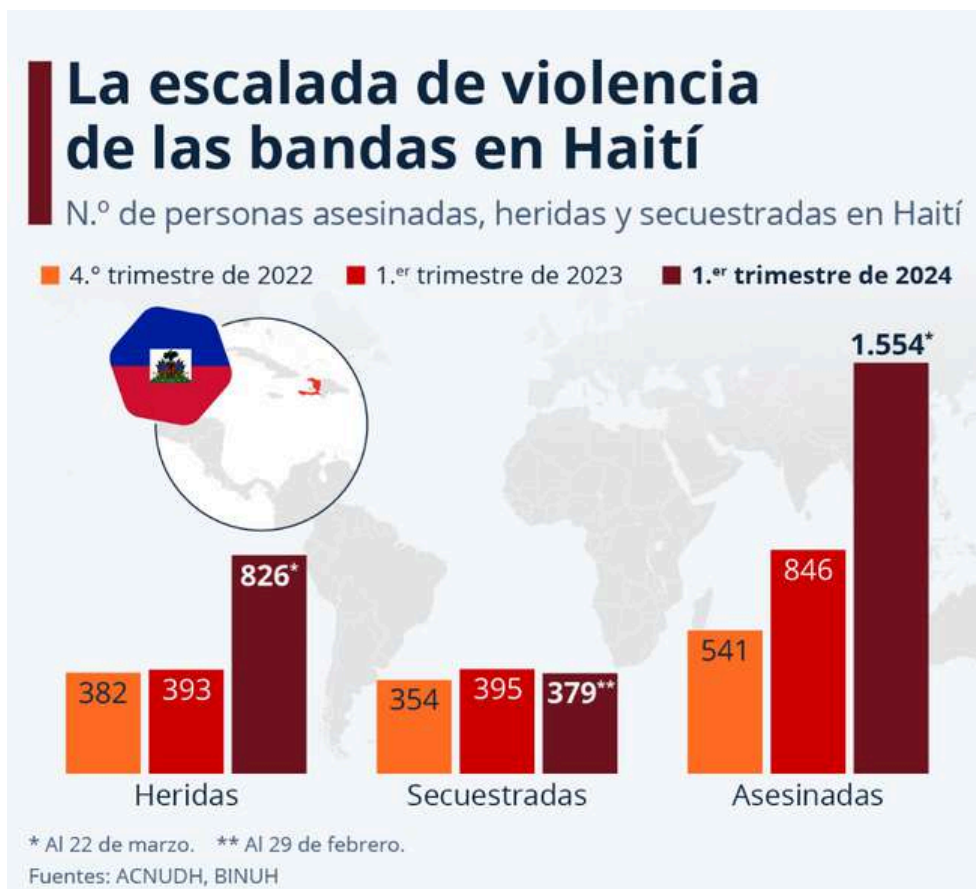
Crisis in Haiti: international intervention does not seem to be helping to mitigate crime.

Haiti is immersed in a political, social and humanitarian crisis that seems to have no end in the short and medium term. The wave of violence, caused by the control exercised by gangs in the territory, has brought immense consequences for the poorest country in the Americas. Currently, criminal gangs dominate more than 80% of Port-au-Prince, as a result of which, in the last year, 578,000 inhabitants have been forced to leave the territory. The leaders of criminal structures openly defy the authorities and the coalition of groups headed by the criminal alias “Barbecue” holds sway over almost the entire capital ([TeleSurTV, 2024](#)).

Haiti's unstable situation dates back decades, but in recent years the situation has worsened considerably. With the assassination of then President Jovenel Moïse by Colombian mercenaries in 2021, a power vacuum emerged that has allowed the gangs to expand their control over the territory. Since the assassination, Prime Minister Ariel Henry assumed power, a position he held until early 2024.

During his term in office, Henry enjoyed great unpopularity, which led to an alliance between criminal groups to oust him from power. In this context, violence and coordinated criminal actions between organizations against critical infrastructure and state institutions became a constant. The low legitimacy of the president, added to the expansion of the groups, made the gangs become the authorities in the controlled areas (BBC, 2024).

Violence escalation in Haiti in the last three years



Resource: Statista, 2024.

At the same time, the security forces lost more and more capacity. According to 2023 figures, the Haitian National Police has 9,000 active-duty officers, a figure that is extremely low considering that, for a country of 11.5 million inhabitants, the UN suggests approximately 26,000 officers. According to the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, by 2022 there were a total of 200 gangs in Haiti, 95 of them based in Port-au-Prince. This is evidence of the inferiority of state forces in the face of criminal structures. The International Committee of the Red Cross stated that in order to deliver humanitarian aid, personnel have been hampered and have been forced to talk to gang leaders in order to provide care (BBC, 2024).



The situation has been escalating, to the point that in recent days Haiti extended the state of emergency to the entire national territory. Faced with this situation, several foreign countries have decided to intervene, although so far without convincing success. Such is the case of Kenya, which has been present in the territory for some months. In addition to the persistent actions of the gangs, the Kenyan Army's mission has been involved in various scandals. This is not an isolated case, the missions of the last 12 years, supported by the UN, have been condemned for embezzlement, human rights violations, abuse of power, among other crimes ([TeleSurTV](#), 2024).

Recently, Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State, arrived in Port-au-Prince to evaluate "the stabilization efforts of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MMAS), which is trying to help local agents restore order". With the visit, the U.S. announced new aid for Haiti and requested more funds to finance the police ([El Espectador](#), 2024). According to Brian Nichols, Blinken additionally would have pushed for elections to be held, an activity that has not taken place since 2016 ([France24](#), 2024).

The situation in Haiti does not seem to be improving in the near future despite the numerous international interventions. In the case of Kenya, it has been several months since the arrival of the mission and the citizens say they have not seen any results so far. The Core Group, a group of countries led by the United States that seeks to support the situation in Haiti, has not been able to mitigate the crisis for 20 years. It is for this reason that an important part of the social organizations consider that rather than a solution, foreign intervention is part of the problem ([TeleSurTV](#), 2024). For the time being, the situation in Haiti seems to be getting more and more acute and, at the same time, the questioning of the aid from foreign nations is increasing.



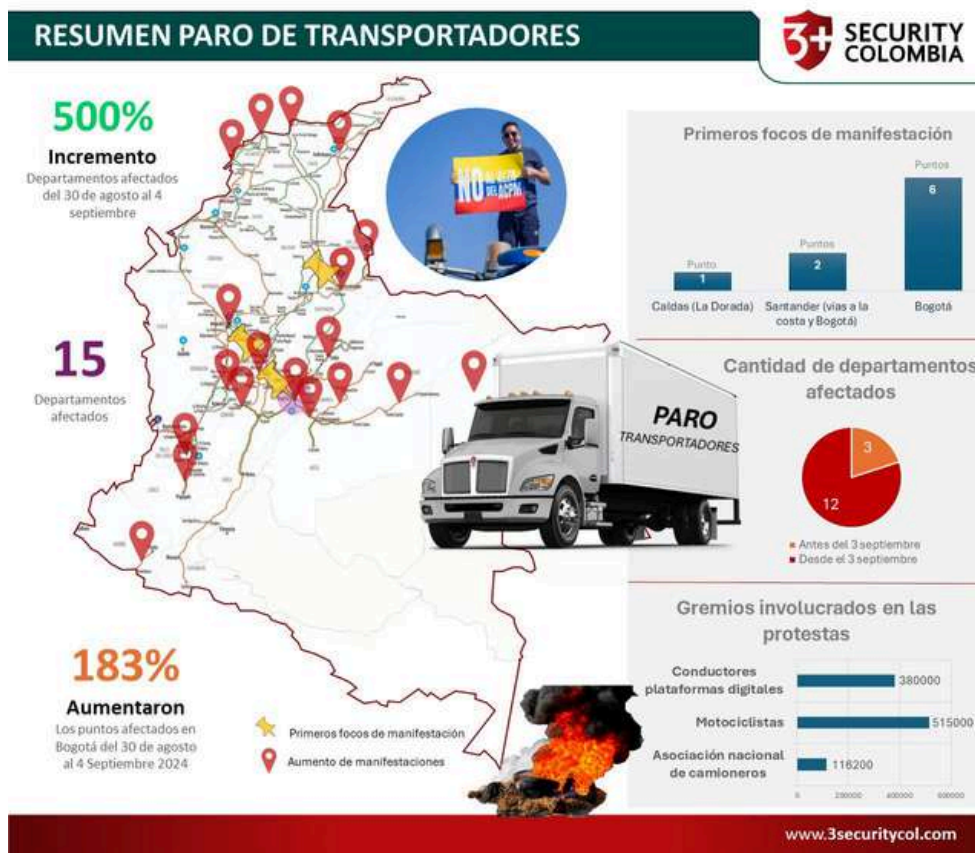
National Transporters' Strike: What do the mobilizations reflect on Petro's governability? How was the National Government's handling of the protest?

Between August 30 and September 6, 2024, the truck drivers' union went on strike nationwide due to the increase in the price of ACPM. To understand the Petro Government's decision it is necessary to go back to 2020, year in which the then President Iván Duque made the decision to stop the increase in gasoline and diesel prices. This caused a quarterly deficit of 10 billion pesos in the Fuel Price Stabilization Fund (FEPC), which covered part of the cost. In order to reduce the fiscal deficit and increase social investment, in 2022 the government implemented a gradual increase in the price of gasoline; however, the increase in diesel was postponed due to the impact it would have on inflation. Diesel remained stable until last August 30, when the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit and the Ministry of Mines and Energy issued resolutions establishing an adjustment of \$1,904 pesos in its price ([El Espectador](#), 2024).



The resolution would go into effect as of Saturday, August 31, so it did not take long for the transportation union to organize against the decision taken. Although during the first few days the blockades and protests took place only in certain areas, by September 5, a large part of the country was witnessing the demonstrations of cargo transporters. Approximately 23 departments were affected, 1,881 vehicles participated, 89 permanent blockades and 227 protest activities took place. In the case of Bogotá, around 20 active blockade points were identified (UnianDES, 2024).

Statistics and geo-referencing of the National Transporters' Strike 2024



Resource: own elaboration based on information provided by media.

Despite lasting only a few days, the impact of the strike was notorious. According to Fenalco, losses were estimated at 240 billion pesos per day ([El Tiempo](#), 2024). Sales fell by 60-80% and departments such as Cundinamarca, Santander, Norte de Santander and Boyacá were notably affected. Bogota was of particular concern as the city depends largely on food supplies from other regions; if the blockades had extended, the situation would have become critical ([El Colombiano](#), 2024). This added to the mayor's statement that gasoline was becoming scarce.

Regarding the Petro administration's handling of the strike, it is possible to highlight several points. In the first place, it is worth noting that, unlike in past administrations, violence was not the instrument of choice to deal with the situation, a fact of great value since President Petro has always advocated for dialogue rather than force in the scenarios of citizen protests. In spite of this, the president did lose legitimacy when he labeled the participants of the demonstrations as "puppets" guided by the great powers that incited them to take to the streets. It is also important to highlight the short duration of the strike, in this sense the National Government was right, however, experts wonder at what cost. This is due to the fact that the government will have to continue subsidizing diesel, leaving resources that could be invested in other projects ([El Espectador](#), 2024). In this sense, the government will continue getting into debt, a figure that could reach 10 trillion pesos in 2025, taking into account that for this year the administration's goal was to collect \$1.6 trillion pesos and it will only reach \$600,000 million pesos ([El Espectador](#), 2024).

In the words of Laura Wills, Vice-Dean of Research at the School of Social Sciences of the Universidad de los Andes, "this conflict reflects the complex relations between the Government, society and Congress on economic policy issues, and shows the political risk faced by the Executive with such a powerful union". While the measure of the increase is fiscally sound for the country, the decision is deeply anti-popular and, taking into account the low levels of approval of Petro's administration, it is to be expected that citizens will support the demands of the transporters, see them as legitimate and blame the whole situation on the current president's administration. Even if pressure is exerted on both parties, the government tends to be more affected, governance and citizen perception of the administration depend to a large extent on the management of the situation ([Uniandes](#), 2024).

Note. *The investigative work and analysis contained in this report is exclusive to 3+ Security Colombia. Therefore, it is recommended not to disclose the document in question. 3+Security Colombia Ltda., reserves the right to interpretation that may arise by the reader in the review and visualization of the information presented".*



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