



## SECURITY OVERVIEW

Santiago – Chile

Unidad de Análisis Político y Seguridad Corporativa - UAPSC

September 12, 2024.

## Security Overview

### Santiago, Chile

#### 1. Situational Analysis

The city of Santiago is the capital of Chile and the most populous in the country, which means that foreign investment comes primarily to this city, and at the same time many of the largest national companies have their center of operations in the metropolitan area. The population and economic density means that criminal structures come to the city of Santiago to take advantage of the possibilities that open up to exploit illicit rents. So far in 2024 there have been incidents of insecurity that have worried both the inhabitants of the Santiago Metro-politan Region and its leaders, as for example in August in the area surrounding the Chilean capital there were 22 homicides in 10 days. This prompted the governor of the Santiago Metropolitan Region, Claudio Orrego, who is close to President Boric's center-left movement, to request assistance from the national government to deal with this wave of organized crime-related crimes ([El País](#), 2024).

According to the National Urban Survey on Citizen Security (ENUSC) conducted by the Subsecretaría de Prevención del Delito and the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, the perception of security of the citizens of the Metropolitan Region has been deteriorating. Residents expressed that over the course of the year 2023 their perception of insecurity in the country has increased by 86% of those surveyed. Similarly, the figures reflect that the perception of insecurity in the communes and neighborhoods has been increasing with 72.6% and 57.9% respectively. In addition, 10.3% of those surveyed state that they or a member of their family has been a victim of robbery with violence or intimidation, which is two percentage points above the national average ([Instituto Nacional de Estadística](#), 2024).

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 Santiago, Chile, 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 the management, treatment and control of risks.

## 2. Crime Analysis

In order to visualize the percentage changes and dynamics by crime in the city of Santiago, a crime analysis will be carried out below, showing the figures and trends in the variation of ten high-impact crimes for two periods: the years 2022-2023 and the January-March period of 2023 vs. 2024. Subsequently, each phenomenon will be analyzed in depth, as well as the risk scenarios present in the city, associating recent insecurity events and the areas in which they materialized.

CRIME STATISTICS IN SANTIAGO	Year 2022	Year 2023	Variation % 2022 vs 2023	Jan-march 2023	Jan-march 2024	Variation % Jan-march 2023 vs 2024
HOMICIDES	47	42	-11%	15	5	-66%
THEFT FROMS PERSONS	10984	13767	25%	3151	3448	9%
THREATS	2895	2953	2%	694	777	12%
RESIDENTIAL THEFT	479	359	-25%	99	101	2%
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	5183	4129	-20%	1097	843	-23%
RETAIL THEFT	1206	1298	8%	290	275	-5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20794</b>	<b>22548</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5346</b>	<b>5449</b>	<b>2%</b>

**Fuente:** Own elaboration with information from the Centro de Estudios y Análisis del Delito (CEAD).

*Note.* Figures subject to change based on source update processes.

According to figures from the Centro de Estudios y Análisis del Delito (CEAD) in the city of Santiago, the most common crime is theft from persons, which in this case is composed of robberies with intimidation or violence, surprise robberies and thefts. This crime was reported 10,984 times in the year 2022 while in 2023 there were 13,767, thus leaving an increase of 25% in the time studied. The variation between January and March 2023 and January and March 2024 was an increase of 9% with 3151 in the 2023 period and 3448 in 2024. Similarly threats have experienced an increase in both time intervals analyzed, as between 2022 and 2023 there was a 2% increase from 2895 cases to 2953. Between January and March 2023 and January and March 2024 the variation was a 12% increase from 694 complaints to 777. On the other hand, the crime of homicide has had consecutive decreases of 11% between 2022 and 2023, and 66% between the studied periods of 2023 and 2024, in addition to the fact that its occurrence is relatively low.

### 2.1 Theft from persons

One type of robbery that has been a persistent occurrence in Santiago is the so-called “lanzazos”, in which the offender takes the victim by surprise and quickly removes his personal items, thus consummating the crime. According to figures from the authorities of the Metropolitan Region, this crime increased by 18.2% in this region of the country during the first quarter of 2024 compared to 2023. For

Eduardo Hernandez, manager of the company specialized in crime prevention ALTO, this type of crime does not generate a high level of violence but it does improve the perception of security of citizens ([El Reporte Diario](#), 2024). In January 2024, there was a case in which the Carabineros arrested four people who were throwing spears in the sector of the southern bus terminal of the city. The subjects took advantage of tourists and travelers who went to this place to leave the city, stealing their personal belongings, from wallets to travel bags ([Meganoticias](#), 2024).

In August, the Carabineros arrested three foreign nationals who were staying in Chile illegally and were engaged in shoplifting citizens in the historic district of the city by intimidation or surprise. Their main target was adult women, as they saw them as more vulnerable than other inhabitants of the city. They also had their field of action near the entrances to the city's subway, taking advantage of the crowds that occur during rush hour ([ADN](#), 2024).

## 2.2 Theft in different modalities

Residential theft in Santiago showed a 25% drop in the number of reported cases in 2023 compared to 2022, going from 479 cases to 359. This trend changes when comparing the period between January and March 2023 and January and March 2024, since there was a 2% increase from 99 to 101 cases reported. Retail theft shows a trend contrary to the above mentioned, since between 2022 and 2023 there was an 8% increase in reported cases from 1206 to 1298, while the comparison between January-March 2023 and January-March 2024 shows a 5% decrease from 290 to 275 cases.

With respect to retail theft, there have been reports in the press, as well as from the authorities, about a modality that has become recurrent in recent times called “Turbazos”. This consists of an assault on a store by several people who enter the establishment and quickly and intimidatingly loot the place of products and money. This modality has evolved, and criminals have begun to use this tactic to break into people's homes to steal their belongings quickly. On July 26, a group of young men broke into a home in the municipality of Pudahuel in the Santiago metropolitan area, threatening the family living there, stealing cash, televisions and weapons. They then moved to the municipality of Quinta Normal, where they held an 88-year-old woman at gunpoint to steal electronic devices from her home. The aim of this action is to commit the crime and get away as quickly as possible with as many items as possible ([El País](#), 2024).

## 2.3 Homicides

Due to the wave of homicides experienced by the city of Santiago in 2024, different authorities have requested greater intervention from the national government to make available some resources from the national budget to support crime control in the city. For example, several mayors of the Metropolitan Region have asked the Minister of the Interior, Carolina Tohá, to make available the country's military capabilities to deal with the crime that is increasing every day in the territory. The mayor of Peñalolén, a municipality east of the Santiago metropolitan area, called for the use of the technologies and some logistical processes of the national army to support the monitoring and patrolling of the Santiago metropolitan area. In response to this, the Minister of the Interior replied that the government of President Boric has never seen with bad

eyes the possibility of collaborating in this way, however, in order to carry it out in a legitimate and legal way, a State of Emergency should be called in the Metropolitan Region, and according to experts in both the Police and the Army, this would not be so beneficial ([El País](#), 2024).

In July of this year, two events shocked the people of Santiago because in two days there were two multiple murders involving young people and foreign citizens. The first occurred in the early morning of July 14 in the Quilicura district in the north of Santiago, where four teenagers were killed as they were leaving a birthday celebration in the area. The second occurred at an events center in the Lampa district on Tuesday, July 16, in the midst of a shooting in which five people died, all of them former foreigners, according to Carabineros. These events highlight the growth of organized crime in the city, and how the security of one of the safest cities on the continent has deteriorated as a result ([BBC](#), 2024).

## 2.4 Extortion, kidnapping and threats

According to figures from the Ministerio Público de Chile, kidnapping in the country suffered a 68% increase between 2021 and 2022, the most significant in a decade. By 2023, 850 cases were registered in the transandean country, and its capital, Santiago, is one of the territories most affected by this. One of the most recent cases was the kidnapping of Venezuelan ex-military Ronald Ojeda by the Venezuelan transnational criminal group “Tren de Aragua” in Maipú, in the southwest of Santiago. Ojeda was later killed by the criminals in one of the so-called “torture houses” they have in this sector. The authorities have not yet determined the motive for this particular crime, however, investigations by the Fiscalía suggest that it was all orchestrated by alias “El Turco” from the city of Bogota in Colombia. For the specialized portal Insight Crime, the wave of kidnappings has been correlated to the arrival and expansion of the “Tren de Aragua”, as this criminal group uses kidnapping, extortion and threats as a way to show power and presence in Santiago ([Insight Crime](#), 2024).

Earlier this year, the Santiago Carabinero Corps found a second “torture house” in the Maipu area belonging to the “Tren de Aragua”. These establishments were used by the criminal group to hold kidnap victims, most of whom were Colombian nationals, and for the distribution of narcotics such as ketamine or cocaine. These houses were useful for the criminals because from these they could maintain control over the area, in addition to maintaining operations in the rest of the city of Santiago ([El País](#), 2024).

## 3 Risk Generating Factors

### 3.1 Micro-trafficking and criminal groups

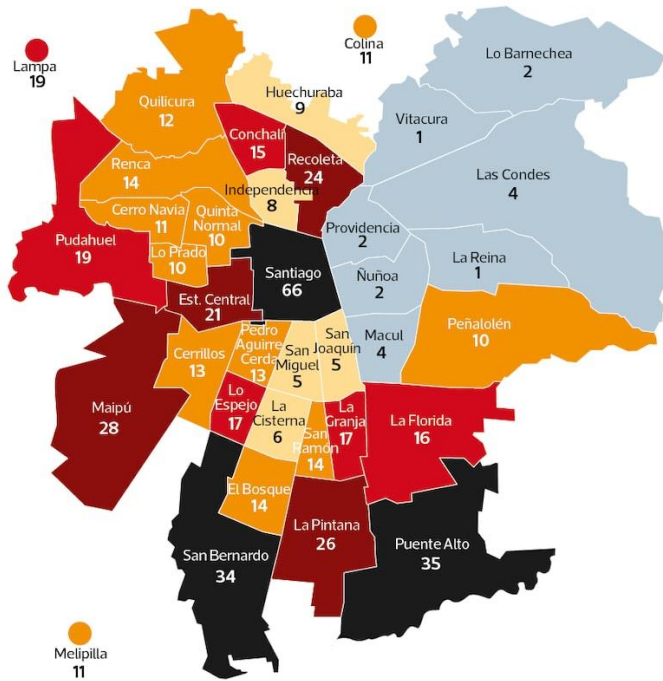
#### Distribution of homicides in the Santiago metropolitan region

**HOMICIDIOS EN LA RM**

**LT**

Frecuencia

De 1 a 4   De 5 a 9   De 10 a 14   De 15 a 19   De 20 a 29   + de 30



FUENTE: Informe de Homicidios (Ministerio del Interior)

LA TERCERA

**Resource:** La Tercera with figures from the Ministerio de Interior, 2024.

According to security experts in Chile, since the social outbreak in 2019 and the pandemic in 2020, transnational organized crime groups have been settling in the country, especially in the capital. This because of the possibilities of having easily accessible illicit rents such as drug trafficking, kidnapping or extortion. Although in the past there were already some common crime groups in the territory that handled this type of illegal business, the arrival of transnational groups has made the situation even more complex, increasing the number of violent crimes such as homicides, extortion, kidnappings, personal injuries or threats. The main groups that have arrived from other countries and have begun to have a presence in the city of Santiago are the “Tren de Aragua” from Venezuela, “Los Espartanos” from Colombia and “Los Pulpos” from Peru. Territorial disputes have become one of the main factors generating violence among these transnational criminal groups, leading to violent confrontations with high caliber weapons in order to gain the upper hand over their rivals. It should be clarified that Chile, having the status of being one of the safest countries in the region, does not have as much experience in combating this type of risk, while the territories

from which criminal groups arrive have a long history of deep conflicts, so the impact of their actions profoundly affects the perception of security of the people of Santiago ([DW](#), 2024).

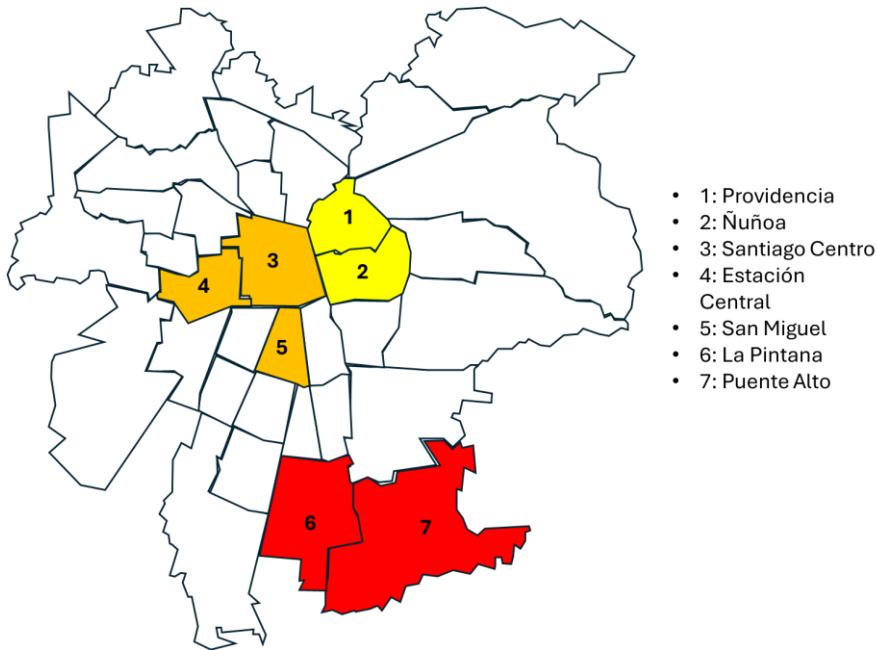
According to Jorge Araya, an academic at the University of Chile and former director of Public Security at the Ministerio del Interior, there will naturally be districts in which the homicide rate increases due to their high population, such as Maipú or Puente Alto, but there are other factors that affect this measure. For example, the fact that in these communes there are more cases of social vulnerability, such as inequality and poverty, which are structural problems of the State, makes it easier for criminal structures to operate in these territories. Also, the high population concentration in these communities makes the drug trafficking market more attractive and therefore the territorial dispute becomes more violent ([La Tercera](#), 2024).

### 3.2 Social Unrest

Since the return of democracy to Chile in 1990, social movements have been characterized by organizing mass demonstrations to demand greater freedoms and to complain about situations that they consider to be an attack on these freedoms. In the case of Santiago, being the capital and home to a great diversity of people, in addition to having the headquarters of the most important universities in the country such as the Universidad de Chile or the Universidad Católica, makes the city a key point for this type of legitimate demonstrations by the community. The current Presidente de la República himself, Gabriel Boric, emerged as a prominent political actor in the student demonstrations. In past years there have been large citizen mobilizations, such as those that occurred in 2019, which began with the discontent of university students with the high price of public transportation in Santiago, and then evolved into a popular demand for the socioeconomic model of the country. This social outburst also resulted in riots and clashes between protesters and the security forces, which generated insecurity for the rest of the citizenry. In more recent times, similar events have occurred as the social changes promised by President Boric, and by the National Constituent Assembly in charge of drafting the new constitution, have not arrived in the timeframe people expected. For example, in April multiple unions, labor centers and student associations marched through the streets of downtown Santiago to demand that Congress unblock the social reforms being processed in the legislature, and thus fulfill the promises made by the executive ([France 24](#), 2024).

## 4. Risk Level

The purpose of the risk level analysis is to identify the areas where, according to institutional statistics, there is a greater likelihood of violence and high-impact crime. In the case of this Security Overview- Santiago, the characterization will be based on security and crime statistics from the Centro de Estudios y Análisis del Delito (CEAD) and the Ministerio del Interior. The most problematic areas of the city will then be identified through two indicators: homicide and theft from persons.



Resource: Centro de Estudios y Análisis del Delito (CEAD) y el Ministerio del Interior, 2024.

**Medium Risk Level:** Providencia and Ñuñoa

In Santiago, neighborhoods such as **Providencia** and **Ñuñoa** are classified as medium risk level. Providencia is a central area that combines residences and commerce, offering a good quality of life. Despite some crime problems, such as petty theft, it is generally considered a safe place, especially in its tourist areas. For its part, Ñuñoa is a residential neighborhood popular with families, where occasional crime is also reported, but in a context that keeps it relatively safe.

**Medium-High Risk Level:** San Miguel, Estación Central and Santiago Centro.

Estación Central is a sector that has been identified as one of the most crime-ridden in Santiago. The presence of informal commerce and the high concentration of people can generate an environment prone to robbery and violent crime. Santiago Centro, being the heart of the city, attracts many people, which can lead to crimes such as robberies with violence. Areas away from the Plaza de Armas tend to be more problematic due to the high concentration of people and commerce. Although San Miguel has safer areas, it faces challenges related to drug trafficking and associated violence, which raises its ranking to medium-high risk.

**High Risk Level:** La Pintana and Puente Alto



La Pintana faces a high level of crime, with problems related to drug trafficking and violence, exacerbated by a lack of resources and opportunities. Puente Alto, being one of the largest communes in Santiago, also faces a similar situation, with higher crime rates in certain areas. Factors such as the economic and social situation directly influence the increase in crime in these sectors.

## 5. Foresight Design

Santiago de Chile is a metropolis with a diverse population and high density, which generates significant challenges in terms of security. In recent years, public policies have been implemented that have contributed to the reduction of violent crime, which has helped to partially restore citizens' trust in institutions. However, the perception of insecurity persists, especially with regard to common crimes such as robberies and assaults. Despite improvements in public safety, many citizens continue to feel unsafe when carrying out everyday activities, such as withdrawing money from ATMs or using their cell phones on the street. These incidents have generated a sense of vulnerability among the population, which is reflected in the concerns expressed by citizens.

Organized crime also represents a major challenge in Santiago, with powerful foreign criminal gangs such as the “Tren de Aragua” increasing their presence in certain communes. This phenomenon has contributed to a climate of violence and the perception that security policies are not fully effective. Activities related to drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime affect security in several areas of the city. The local administration must address Santiago's complexity and diversity in formulating effective security policies. It is essential that these strategies not only focus on combating organized crime, but also address the daily concerns of citizens, thus improving the quality of life and security in the Chilean capital. Initiatives carried out by different leaders of the Santiago metropolitan area such as collaborating with the national government to have Army resources to fight organized crime should be evaluated so that there can be fluid communication and multisectoral solutions to such serious problems. Proposals such as that of the national government to allocate resources for the construction of a more robust penitentiary center that can better accommodate criminals may prove to be a good alternative to combat this problem that afflicts the people of Santiago.

## 6. Recommendations

- 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.
- Taking into account the description of the Risk Level provided in this document, identify the communities with a high risk level. This in order to foresee safety and self-care plans.
- In case of travel in a private vehicle, perform a route analysis and have alternate routes that allow you to resolve any new developments on the route.
- Do not transit or travel late at night.

- For the movement of expatriates or foreigners within Santiago, evaluate the likelihood of having systems to monitor their movements remotely from a Command Center.
- If you are in crowded places such as restaurants, shopping malls or bars, always take care of your personal belongings and avoid conversations with people who suddenly ask for favors or want to approach you.
- Avoid having detailed or sensitive information about your family members and the organization you work for on your cell phone.
- Be careful with the information you publish on your social networks, bearing in mind that the less privacy you have, the greater the risk of extortion or kidnapping.
- If you are a victim of telephone extortion, do not hang up, try to take notes, do not give your name or your identity number and, if possible, record the call.
- 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 criminals.
- 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.
- If you find yourself in a highly vulnerable situation and prone to be a victim of robbery, mugging or robbery, do not put up any resistance.

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