



SECURITY OVERVIEW

Sao Paulo – Brasil

Unidad de Análisis Político y Seguridad Corporativa - UAPSC

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Security Overview

Sao Paulo, Brasil

1. Situational and Geographic Analysis

The city of Sao Paulo is one of the most important cities in Brazil due to its importance in the country's economy, as it receives a large part of the foreign investment that comes to the country, as well as the dynamization of Brazilian multinational businesses. For this reason, it is a diverse and dynamic city that attracts a large population from other regions of Brazil, as well as from the state of Sao Paulo itself. For this reason, it is one of the largest cities in the world, with close to 12 million inhabitants in its urban area. These factors contribute to the fact that crime wants to take advantage of this scenario to strengthen itself and at the same time grow its illicit economies. During the four years that Mayor Ricardo Nunes was in charge of the prefecture of Sao Paulo, the security strategy focused on expanding crime prevention programs for at-risk youth, modernizing and equipping police forces, strengthening cooperation between different security and justice agencies, and implementing advanced technologies for surveillance and criminal data analysis, resulting in an improved perception of security in the large Brazilian metropolis.

According to a survey conducted by the São Paulo Public Safety Secretariat in the first half of 2024, the areas with the highest perception of insecurity in the city were the Historic Center, with a perception of citizen insecurity of 78%, and São Mateus, with 74%. It is worth noting that Centro Histórico had an increase of 12% over the previous year's figures. In contrast, the area with the lowest perception of insecurity in the city was Jardins with 15%. In 2024 the new administration of the city will be elected and therefore it is important to be attentive to the proposals that may come from the winner of this race to have a clearer perspective towards the future.

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 Sao Paulo, Brazil, 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 São Paulo, a crime analysis will be conducted below, showing the figures and trends in the variation of different high-impact crimes over the first six months of 2024. Likewise, each phenomenon will be analyzed in depth, as well as the risk scenarios present in the city, associating recent events of insecurity and the areas in which they materialized.

In general, the Public Security Secretariat of the state of Sao Paulo has registered a decrease in crime figures throughout the territory, including the state capital. This is reflected in figures such as homicides, which show historical numbers due to the low incidence in a territory with such a high population density as Sao Paulo.

2.1 Theft from persons

In 2024, São Paulo experienced a slight fluctuation in personal theft rates. According to recent public safety statistics, there has been a 5% decrease compared to the previous year. However, the absolute number remains high due to the city's large population. In concrete terms, it is estimated that around 20,000 cases of theft from persons have been reported during the year ([Globo](#), 2024).

Theft from persons in São Paulo takes place through various modalities such as pickpocketing, muggings or false emergency cases. Pickpocketing is one of the most common forms of theft in public places, such as public transportation, markets and commercial areas. Criminals often work in groups and take advantage of crowds to steal cards, cell phones and other valuables. The subway and buses are critical points for these crimes due to the high levels of congestion. Criminals tend to operate during rush hour, when passenger density is high, making the thefts less detectable ([Metrópoles](#), 2024). Assault robbery is a modality that includes more direct attacks, such as street robbery. Offenders may threaten or intimidate victims to steal their belongings. Fake emergency cases occur when offenders pretend to be people in need of help or are involved in some sort of ruse to distract victims while the theft is occurring ([CNN](#), 2024).

Although São Paulo has seen an overall decrease in theft from persons in 2024, it remains a city with significant security challenges. The combination of policing strategies, public education and infrastructure improvements remains crucial to reduce these crimes and increase the safety of residents and visitors.

2.2 Theft in different modalities

In 2024, approximately 8,000 carjackings have been registered in São Paulo and although the numbers may vary, there has been a slight decrease compared to previous years, in part due to improvements in surveillance and security technology. Criminals often target luxury cars or cars in high demand on the black market. There have been several notable cases of thefts from parking areas of large shopping malls, which has led to increased surveillance in these areas ([Insight Crime](#), 2024).

It is estimated that around 6,000 motorcycles were stolen in São Paulo in 2024. Motorcycle theft remains a persistent problem due to the ease of transport and concealment of stolen motorcycles. It usually materializes when criminals find motorcycles parked on public roads, especially in less policed areas, and are frequently targeted. Criminals often use tools to break locking systems. A fairly common modality for this type of theft is the theft of motorcycles used by delivery companies, which has affected the operations of several businesses. The southern zone and the center of the city are the most affected by this type of theft, which makes these areas critical points for residents and visitors, as well as for law enforcement ([Metrópoles](#), 2024)

2.3 Homicides

In 2024, São Paulo has registered approximately 1,500 homicides. This figure represents a slight decrease compared to the previous year, which registered around 1,700 homicides ([R7](#), 2024). Although there is a slight decrease in the total number of homicides, violence remains a significant problem in the city. Homicides committed with firearms are one of the most common types of homicides in São Paulo. They include murders related to criminal activity, gang confrontations and interpersonal violence. This is mainly due to disputes between organized crime gangs who fight over territories to continue the exploitation of illicit economies such as drug trafficking, or extortion. In the peripheral neighborhoods and favelas of the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo, this is more prevalent due to the lack of territorial control that state institutions may suffer in the city ([CNN](#), 2024).

2.4 Extortion, kidnapping and threats

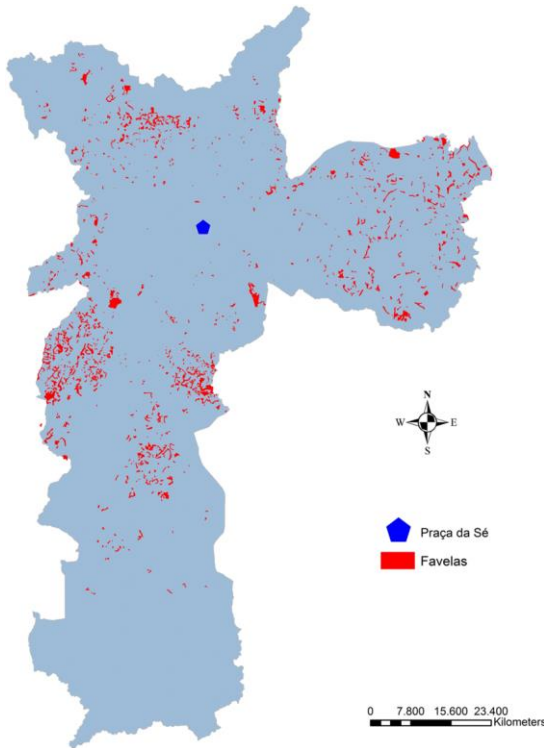
Kidnapping in the city of São Paulo is a crime that has affected the population significantly over time. Criminal groups tend to use this practice as a threatening way to steal cargo or money from truck drivers circulating in vulnerable areas of the Sao Paulo metropolitan area. In January 2024, a truck driver was abducted by a group of criminals who held him for 24 hours and demanded R\$30,000 from his family to release him. As a result, the Metropolitan Police of Sao Paulo conducted an investigation and managed to capture four members of this group dedicated to kidnapping for ransom in Guarulhos ([Gobierno de Sao Paulo](#), 2024). In a media case that occurred in December 2023, the famous ex-football player Marcelinho Carioca was kidnapped along with a companion while leaving a show in the Itaquera area in the east of the city. It is presumed that this event occurred with the intention of extorting money from the victim's entourage for his public image and fame in the country ([CNN Brasil](#), 2024).

The precandidate for the prefecture of Sao Paulo for the Brazilian Labor Renovation Party (PRTB), Pablo Marçal denounced on Monday, June 10, that he was being threatened by means of WhatsApp messages in which the intention to kidnap him was expressed. The Metropolitan Police started an investigation in order to determine the possible risks that may materialize ([CNN Brasil](#), 2024).

3 Risk Generating Factors

3.1 Micro-trafficking and criminal groups

Distribution of favelas where the PCC has operations in the city of Sao Paulo

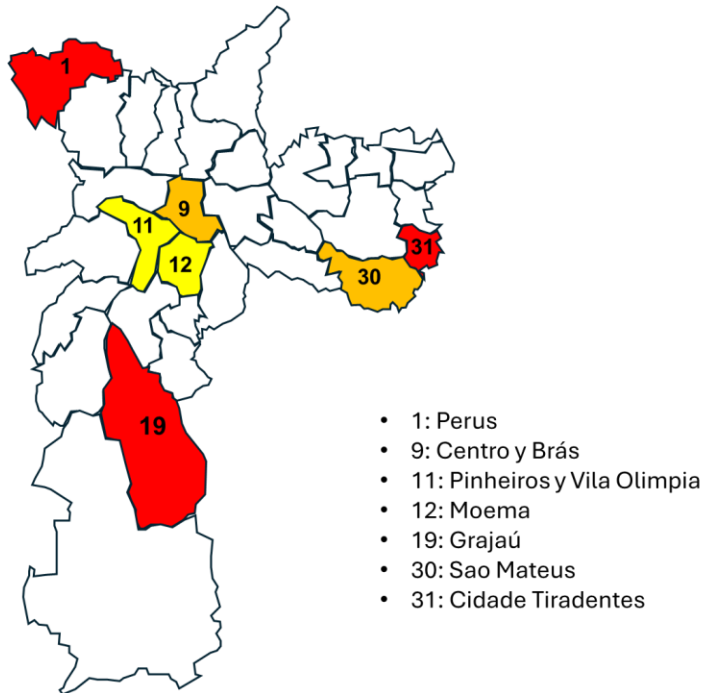


Resource: Pax Monopolista and Crime: The Case of the Emergence of the Primeiro Comando da Capital in São Paulo, 2020.

According to reports from Brazilian authorities, the main criminal gangs in the city of Sao Paulo and its metropolitan area are the Pimeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Comando Vermelho (CV), which control most of the drug trafficking routes, as well as drug distribution in the city. The PCC is currently the largest criminal group in Brazil and its main centers of operations are prisons and favelas, as it was formed as a way of dealing with the harsh treatment received by prisoners by the security forces inside penitentiary establishments. It currently controls extortion, kidnapping and drug trafficking networks throughout the country and is therefore a critical player in Sao Paulo's security landscape. On the other hand, the CV is an older criminal group that emerged in Rio de Janeiro and inspired the creation of the PCC during the 1990s. Until 2026 these criminal groups maintained a truce in which they did not affect each other's illicit rent

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- Sao Paulo, the characterization will be based on security and crime statistics from the Sao Paulo Public Security Secretariat and the Sao Paulo Military Police. The most problematic areas of the city will then be identified through two indicators: homicide and theft from persons.



Resource: Secretaría de Seguridad Pública de Sao Paulo y de la Policía Militar de Sao Paulo, 2024.

Medium Risk Level: Pinheiros, Moema and Vila Olímpia

In areas of Pinheiros, Moema and Vila Olímpia, the level of risk is moderate. Pinheiros combines residential and commercial areas, showing a moderate rate of petty crime such as robberies and thefts, although police response is adequate. Moema, with good infrastructure, shows a moderate incidence of petty crime and theft, but remains relatively safe. Vila Olímpia, growing steadily, has a moderate crime rate with some robberies and petty crime, but the authorities and local infrastructure help keep risk at a manageable level.

Medium-High Risk Level: Centro, Brás and São Mateus

Downtown São Paulo, with its high density of people and commercial activity, presents a medium-high risk. Although police presence is strong, the high concentration of people contributes to a higher incidence of petty crime and some robberies. Brás, known for its intense commercial activity, also faces a higher level of risk due to agglomeration and the presence of frequent robberies in market areas. São Mateus shows a medium-high risk due to its challenging socio-economic context, with a higher incidence of serious crime and a notable gang presence affecting security.

High Risk Level: Cidade Tiradentes, Perus and Grajaú

Cidade Tiradentes, Perus and Grajaú are classified with the highest risk level. Cidade Tiradentes, with high poverty rates and poor security infrastructure, faces significant crime problems, including high homicide and violent robbery rates. Perus, a peripheral area with serious socioeconomic problems also shows a high incidence of serious crime, exacerbated by a lack of resources and security. Grajaú faces similar challenges, with high levels of violence and gang problems contributing to an environment of high insecurity.

5. Foresight Design

The city of Sao Paulo is the largest metropolis in South America and therefore concentrates a large number of people from diverse backgrounds, which, combined with its high population density, makes it especially complex to analyze its security situation. The administration of Mayor Ricardo Nunes has managed to reduce the homicide rate and other high-impact crimes in the city that afflict its population considerably. This has somehow restored citizens' trust in state institutions, and they are beginning to have a more positive view of São Paulo's capital city. Similarly, the local police have been given more tools to fight organized crime, such as state-of-the-art cameras and drones to improve surveillance of critical points in the city. However, in factors such as robberies and assaults, the image citizens have is that it has remained the same or has worsened, as in many instances they have spoken out about the danger they perceive in the street when withdrawing money from ATMs or carrying their cell phone in their hand.

Organized crime continues to be the great scourge of the city as the power exercised by the PCC over the most complex neighborhoods and favelas is quite large and continues to influence the city's security. Districts that have been affected by the so-called Cracolândia or open-air drug markets mean that security and citizen perception of the local administration is negatively affected. Drug dealing by organized crime gangs such as the PCC or the CV, means that deaths by firearms continue to be a daily problem due to the dispute over territory and illicit rents. The new administration elected in 2024 to lead the city's future must take into account the complexity and diversity of the city of São Paulo in order to improve local security policies.

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 municipalities with a high-risk level in the city. This in order not to transit through them or to foresee safety and self-care plans.
- 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.
- Do not transit or travel late at night in sub-prefectures or districts that, according to this document, have registered some type of criminal phenomena or have a high level of interference by criminal actors, for example, the districts of Cidade Tiradentes, Perus and Grajaú.
- For the displacement of expatriates or foreigners to the interior of São Paulo, consider the probability 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 through your social networks, taking into account that, with less privacy, your work and personal data and those of your family members are exposed on the network, which can lend itself to extortion or kidnapping processes.
- 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.
- In case of being a victim of threats in any of its modalities, contact the authorities immediately and do not give in to the requests of the offender.
- 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 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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