



# Security OVERVIEW

# BARRANQUILLA

December 2024

# CONTENTS

## 1. Situational Analysis

## 2. Crime Analysis

- 2.1 Theft from persons
- 2.2 Theft in different modalities
- 2.3 Homicides
- 2.4 Extortion and threats

## 3. Risk Generating Factors

- 3.1 Micro-trafficking and Criminal Groups
- 3.2 Extortion and threats
- 3.3 Social unrest and road blockades

## 4. Risk Level

## 5. Foresight Design

## 6. Recommendations



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The Security Overview-Barranquilla Second Half 2024 aims to carry out an analysis, based on statistics, of the security situation of the city in order to build prospective scenarios of the panorama in the short and medium term.

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# 1. Situational Analysis

Since 2023, Barranquilla has been the scene of violent disputes between criminal groups over control of drug trafficking routes and illicit markets. To address this situation, in 2024, the Mayor's strategy focused on collaboration between the Police and the community, strengthening police presence in the city's most unsafe areas and promoting crime prevention and social reintegration programs for at-risk youth ([Las 2 Orillas, 2024](#)).

Despite these efforts, high-impact crimes such as homicides and robberies have increased compared to the previous year, particularly in the most vulnerable neighborhoods. The power of the gangs and the conflicts between them have become so entrenched that, while security plans have indeed reduced the occurrence of certain crimes, they have not significantly impacted the broader landscape of violence in the capital of Atlántico ([Pares, 2024](#)).



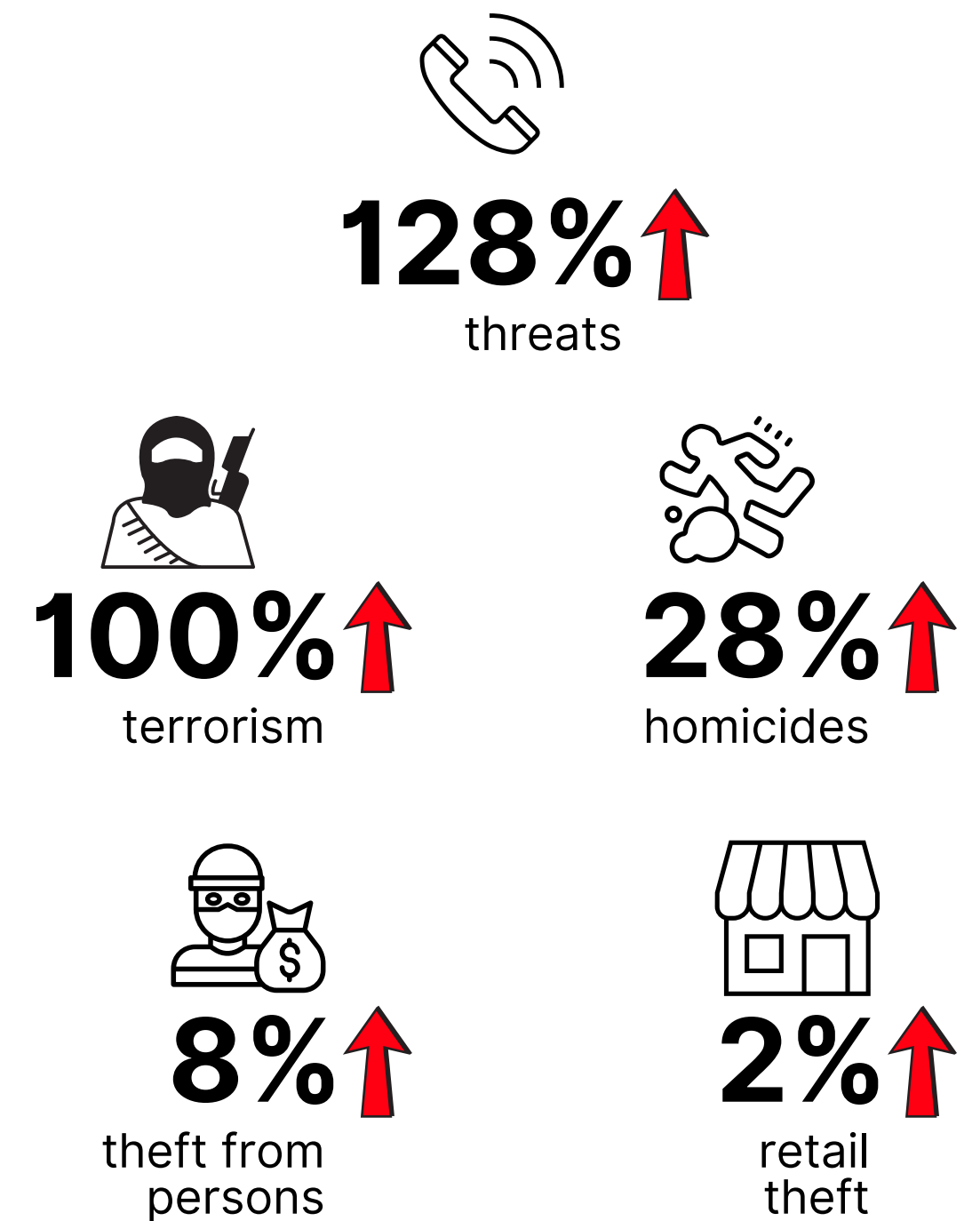
# 2. Crime Analysis

## High impact crimes in Barranquilla 2024

CRIME STATISTICS IN BARRANQUILLA	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023	VARIATION % 2022 vs 2023	JAN-OCT 2023	JAN-OCT 2024	VARIATION % JAN-OCT 2023 VS 2024
Homicides	333	375	13%	301	385	28%
Theft from Persons	11569	12966	12%	10215	11034	8%
Extortion	415	894	115%	696	621	-11%
Kidnapping	3	1	-67%	1	0	-100%
Threats	1248	1300	4%	1000	2280	128%
Terrorism	1	0	-100%	0	1	100%
Residence Theft	499	662	33%	568	548	-3%
Carjacking	481	437	-9%	374	333	-11%
Motorcycle Theft	989	1201	21%	979	852	-13%
Retail Theft	1559	1054	-32%	921	939	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17097</b>	<b>18890</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15.055</b>	<b>16.993</b>	<b>13%</b>

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

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



## 2.1 Theft from persons



**4.306**

with without weapons



**1.254**

with bladed weapons



**4.902**

with firearms

In November, authorities dismantled several gangs dedicated to robbery, including "Los Tectónicos," which operated by stealing mobile phones through the "raponazo" and "atraco" methods ([El Heraldo, 2024](#)). Although robbery of individuals is among the crimes with the smallest increase in 2024, it is worth noting that the statistics do not include December, a period when the occurrence of robberies tends to rise due to the festive season.

**In  
November**

authorities  
dismantled  
several gangs  
dedicated to  
robbery



## 2.2 Theft in different modalities

In addition to theft from persons, Barranquilla experiences various types of theft, such as retail theft, residence theft, carjacking, and motorcycle theft. These high-impact crimes affect citizens' security by undermining their property and assets.

In the second half of 2024, a theft case was reported against the security company Prosegur; the gang "Los Usurpadores" stole approximately \$85 billion from one of its branches. So far, authorities have made eight arrests ([El Espectador](#), 2023). Additionally, during the same period, the police dismantled "Los Impostores," who targeted chain stores, "Los Porteros," known for home burglaries, and "Los Kia," specialized in vehicle theft ([El Heraldo](#), 2024).

Cases january-  
october 2024

Variation  
2023 vs. 2024



**548**  
Residence  
theft



**3%**  
Variation



**852**  
Motorcycle  
theft



**13%**  
Variation



**333**  
Carjacking



**11%**  
Variation



**939**  
Retail  
theft



**2%**  
Variation

## 2.3 Homicides



Homicides  
in 2024: **385**

Homicides represent a high-impact issue in the city of Barranquilla. The struggle for control of illicit businesses by local gangs operating in the area has created a violent environment where "settling scores" has become a regular occurrence. Murders and massacres have increased in the capital of Atlántico ([La Silla Vacía, 2024](#)).

The situation has worsened this year. In the first days of December, 18 violent deaths were reported ([La Libertad, 2024](#)). In November, five homicides were reported in less than three days: one in Villanueva, one in Me Quejo, one in La Pradera, and the others in Chinita and Rosario ([La Libertad, 2024](#)). Although crime methods vary, the most common is contract killing, increasingly carried out by youths and minors.





## 2.4 Extortion and kidnapping

Crimes closely linked, such as extortion and threats, represent high-impact criminal phenomena in the city of Barranquilla. Of all extortions committed in 2024, 288 were carried out via phone calls, 161 were conducted directly, and 74 through extortion letters.

In recent months, the threats and extortions against the company SuperGiros by the Clan del Golfo have garnered media attention. The situation has escalated to the point where a staff member was murdered, and several branches were forced to close ([El Tiempo](#), 2024). Bus companies have also been affected by the same organized armed group (GAO); in August, at least 100 drivers decided not to work due to the threats they received ([Noticias RCN](#), 2024).

Cases  
january-october 2024



**2.280**  
Threats



**621**  
Extortion



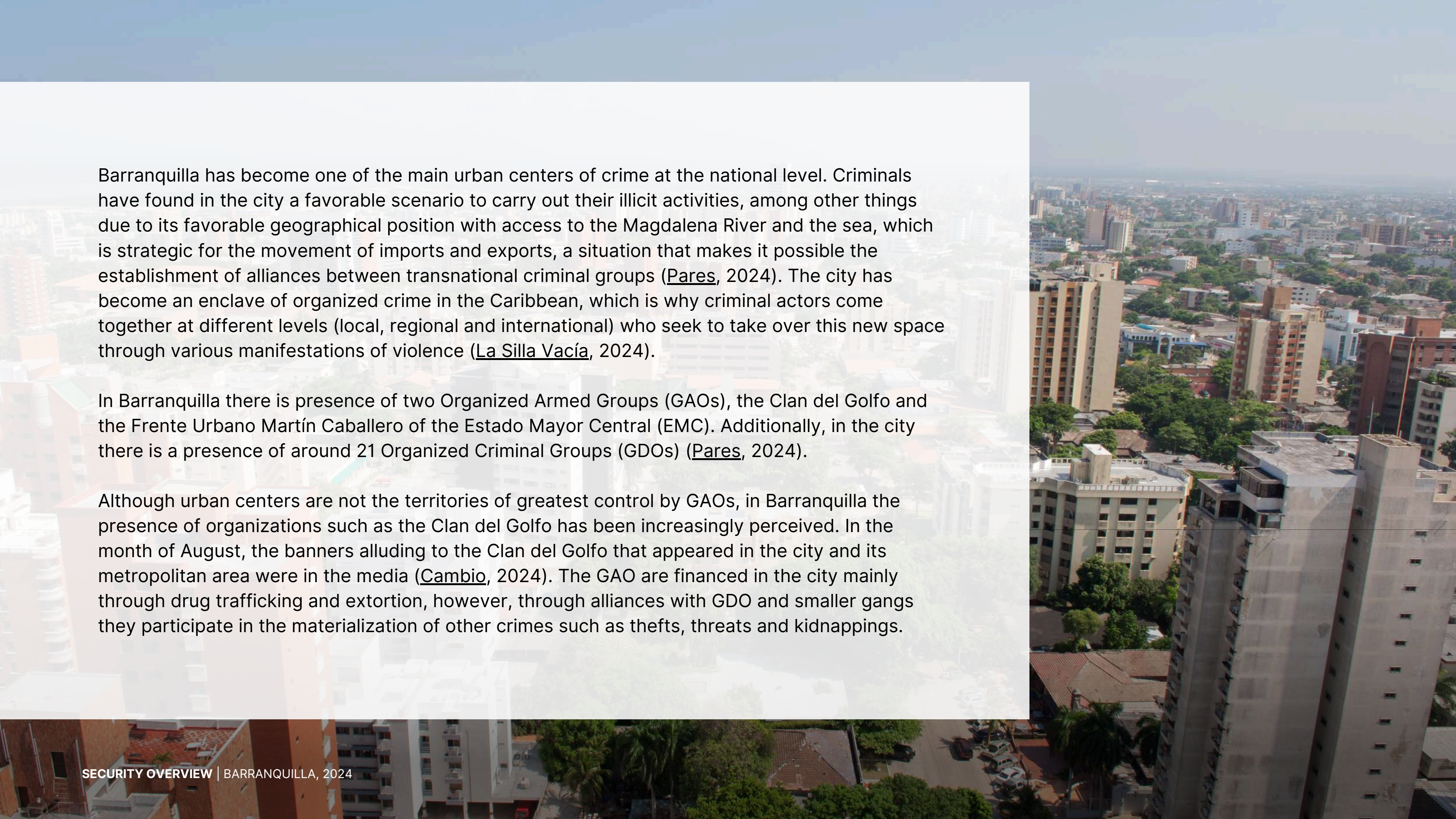
# 3. Risk Generating Factors

## 3.1 Micro-trafficking and Criminal Groups

Table showing the seizures by kilograms of each type of illicit substance in Barranquilla

ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE SEIZED	YEAR 2022 (kg)	YEAR 2023 (kg)	JAN-SEP 2024 (kg)
Cocaine Hydrochloride	12.673,98	6.197,92	4.824,59
Pressed Marijuana	3.693,25	1.636,46	4.750,76
Ecstasy Type Stimulants	745,00	550,00	1.317,00
LSD	0	345,00	914,00
2CB	318,00	426,60	280,90
Cocaine Paste/Base	272,03	44,00	41,45
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.702,26</b>	<b>9.207,26</b>	<b>12.128,7</b>

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



Barranquilla has become one of the main urban centers of crime at the national level. Criminals have found in the city a favorable scenario to carry out their illicit activities, among other things due to its favorable geographical position with access to the Magdalena River and the sea, which is strategic for the movement of imports and exports, a situation that makes it possible the establishment of alliances between transnational criminal groups ([Pares, 2024](#)). The city has become an enclave of organized crime in the Caribbean, which is why criminal actors come together at different levels (local, regional and international) who seek to take over this new space through various manifestations of violence ([La Silla Vacía, 2024](#)).

In Barranquilla there is presence of two Organized Armed Groups (GAOs), the Clan del Golfo and the Frente Urbano Martín Caballero of the Estado Mayor Central (EMC). Additionally, in the city there is a presence of around 21 Organized Criminal Groups (GDOs) ([Pares, 2024](#)).

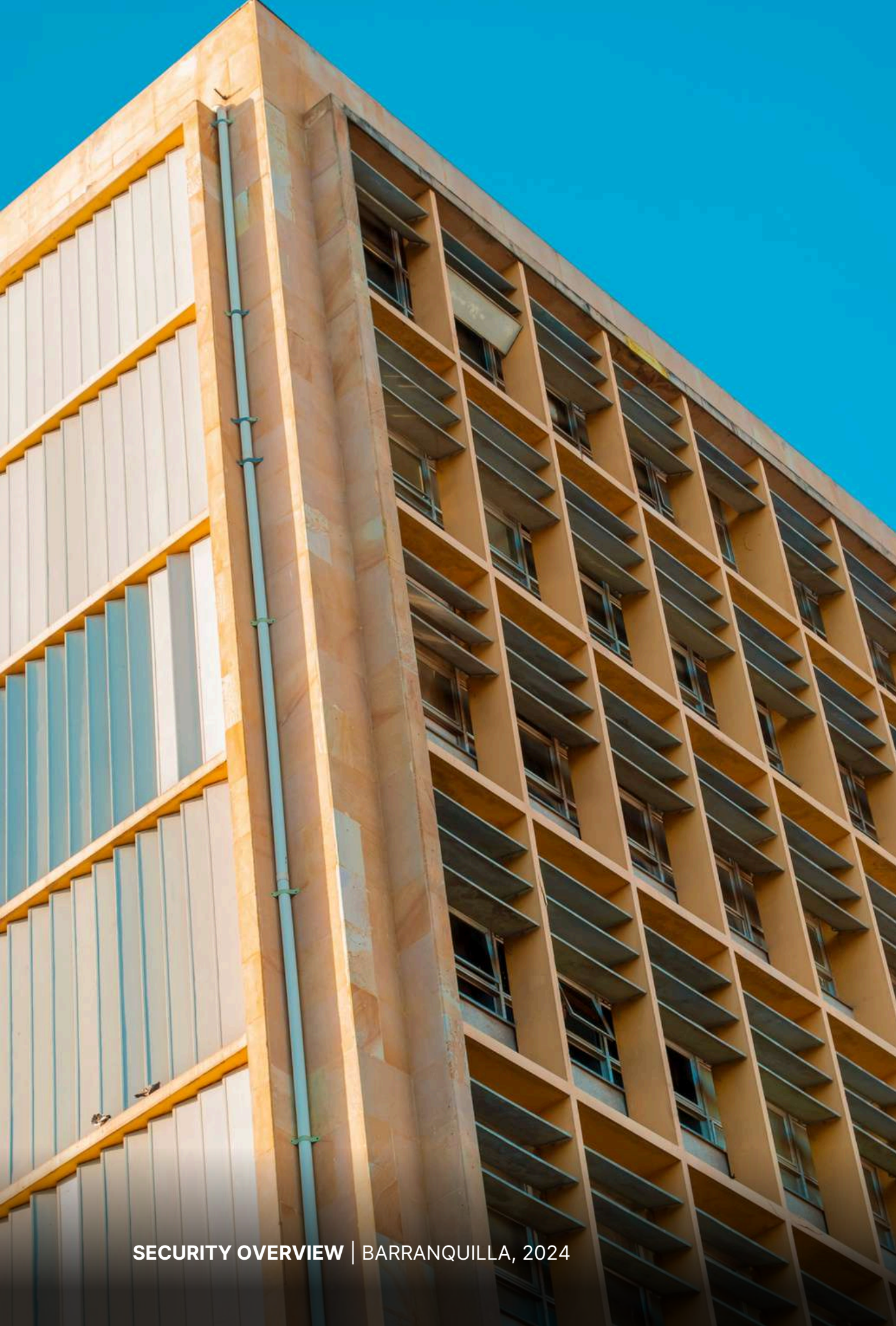
Although urban centers are not the territories of greatest control by GAOs, in Barranquilla the presence of organizations such as the Clan del Golfo has been increasingly perceived. In the month of August, the banners alluding to the Clan del Golfo that appeared in the city and its metropolitan area were in the media ([Cambio, 2024](#)). The GAO are financed in the city mainly through drug trafficking and extortion, however, through alliances with GDO and smaller gangs they participate in the materialization of other crimes such as thefts, threats and kidnappings.

# Presence of criminal organizations in the city of Barranquilla

## NAME OF ORGANIZATION

- Clan del Golfo
- Comando de Elite Urbana
- El combo de Virginia
- EMC FRC - Frente Urbano Martín Caballero
- Grupo de alias "Portafolio"
- Las Diablas
- Los Barrabás
- Los Costeños / La Oficina de la Costa
- Los Cripys
- Los Falsetes
- Los Felipitos
- Los Malcriados
- Los Mente Locas
- Los Paisas
- Los Papalopez
- Los Paticos 2
- Los Pepes
- Los Petardos Junior
- Los Primos
- Los Taquilleros
- Los Temerarios
- Los Vega Daza
- Ratrojos Costeños





## 3.2 Extortion and threats



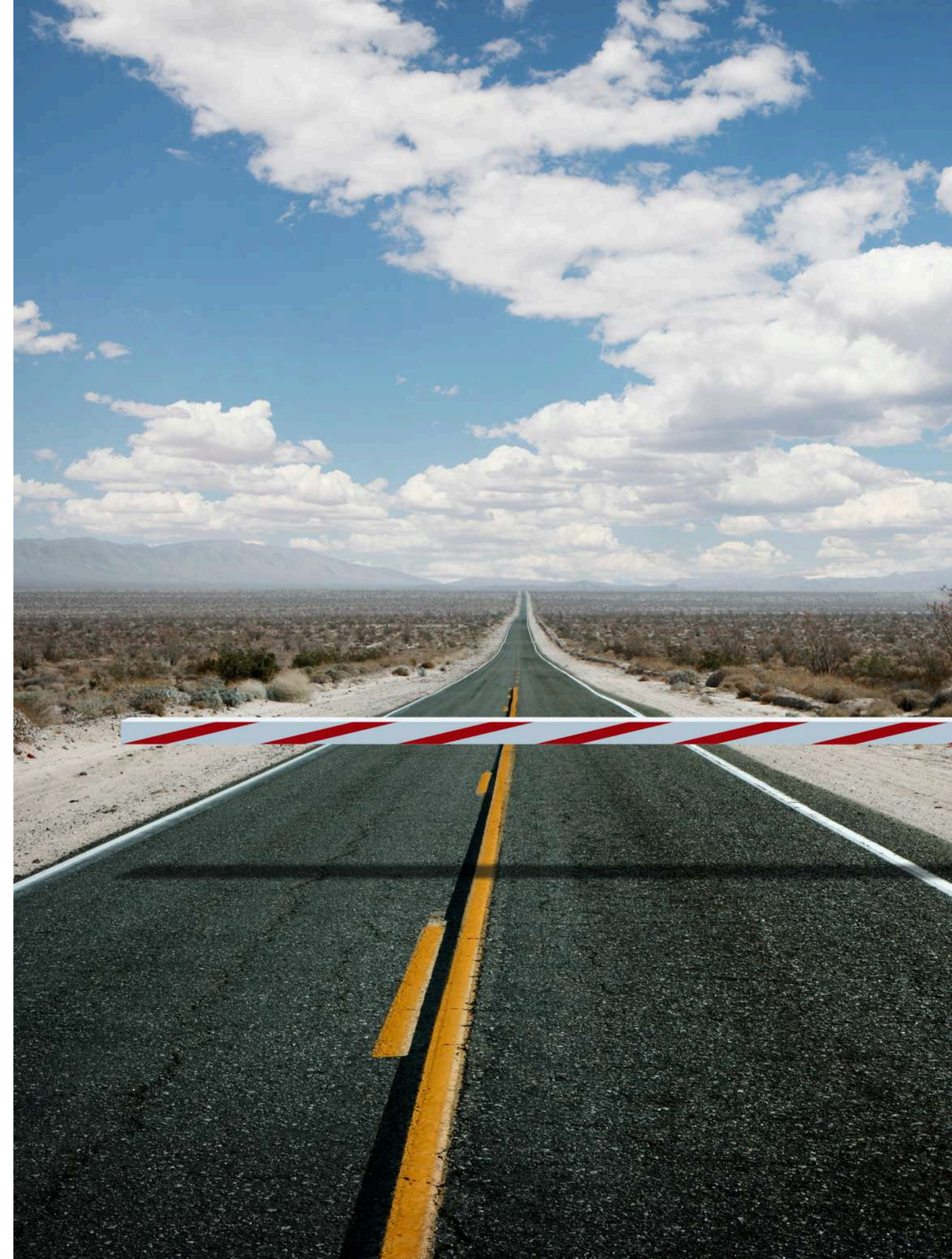
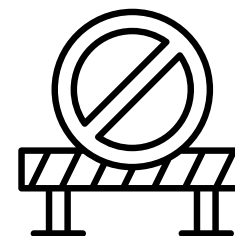
Police statistics show an exponential growth in reports of threats. The above responds to a generalized situation at the national level, where crime at its different levels uses threats as a means of coercion or, when combined with extortion, as a source of financing. Closely linked to the threat is extortion, in this case the figures show a decrease in crime in the last year. However, this could be a consequence of underreporting rather than a real decrease.

In Barranquilla, extortion and threats are a daily problem. Small, medium and large companies have been victims of this criminal phenomenon to such an extent that in some cases they have been forced to suspend their services. Extortion, which is accompanied by a threat to be carried out, has become one of the favorite financing mechanisms of criminal actors. In the month of November, 3,000 service payment points on the Caribbean Coast closed due to threats from the Clan del Golfo ([Infobae, 2024](#)). Likewise, in August the transportation company Lolaya suspended its operations due to constant threats and extortionate fees demanded by a GAO ([El Heraldo, 2024](#)).

## 3.3 Social unrest and road blockades

Although social protest is a right and a legitimate action that reflects the existence of an active democracy, in certain cases demonstrations can become violent or simply affect the mobility of citizens. In these cases, the mobilization can end up impacting the security and rights of the other inhabitants of the city. This year the citizens of Barranquilla have taken to the streets on different occasions. Sit-ins and marches have been the favorite social demonstrations of Barranquilla residents.

In the month of November, some Barranquilla residents joined the national mobilization against the management of the National Government ([El Tiempo](#), 2024). In September, citizens took to the streets again due to failures in the energy service, which have always affected the inhabitants of this area of the country ([W Radio](#), 2024). At the inter-municipal level, there were mobility problems at the entrances and exits of the city due to the blockades generated by protests at the tolls, for example at the Papiros toll, where the protesters carried out a “Plan Tortuga” affecting mobility ([Infobae](#), 2024).



# 4. Risk Level

## Risk Analysis

The risk level analysis aims to identify the areas where, according to institutional statistics, there is a greater possibility of scenarios of violence and the materialization of high-impact crimes. In the case of this Security Overview-Barranquilla Second Half 2024, the characterization will be carried out based on the statistics of the Security Observatory of the Universidad del Norte published in April 2024 ([Observatorio de Seguridad U. Norte, 2024](#)) and in the georeferencing of criminal organizations of the Fundación Paz y Reconciliación ([Pares, 2024](#)). We will then proceed to state the most problematic areas of the city, through three indicators: cases of homicide, extortion and the number of criminal groups per locality.


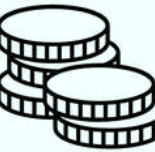


**Barranquilla Map  
Risk Level by  
localities**

- HIGH
- MEDIUM-HIGH
- MEDIUM

*Resource: Own elaboration from information from Observatorio de Seguridad de la Universidad del Norte and Pares, 2024.*



# Analysis of the dynamics of risks in the city of Barranquilla so that companies can carry out evaluations in 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><b>Deterioration in the security situation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment.</li> <li>• Consolidated presence of groups such as common crime, gangs, organized groups.</li> <li>• Influence of the phenomenon of microtrafficking on common and organized crime by developing hitman networks and their strengthening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen distrust</li> <li>• Decrease in local and foreign investment in the city</li> <li>• Affectation of small and medium-sized merchants.</li> <li>• Decrease in tourism potential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible effects on the supply or value chain due to the permeability of crime.</li> <li>• Non-compliance with services or commitments.</li> <li>• Leaks of personnel with intentions of harm to companies.</li> <li>• Fear of market expansion due to criminal networks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p>
 <p><b>Impact on the economic and financial system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corruption in the public and private sector</li> <li>• Increase in poverty and inequality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in foreign investment in the city.</li> <li>• Low salaries.</li> <li>• Labor informality.</li> <li>• Inflation.</li> <li>• Limitation and inappropriate use of public space.</li> <li>• Low company generation</li> <li>• Increased recruitment of criminal groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in demand for services and products.</li> <li>• Decrease in income.</li> <li>• Increase in costs due to phenomena such as inflation.</li> <li>• Limitation of operational capabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium-High</b></p>
 <p><b>Blockades due to social protest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissatisfied communities</li> <li>• Failure to comply with agreements established between citizens and the government.</li> <li>• Insufficient government management and absence of public resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government destabilization.</li> <li>• Interruption of economic activities.</li> <li>• Increased violence.</li> <li>• Resurgence of social conflicts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial losses.</li> <li>• Affects in the supply chain.</li> <li>• Unfavorable business climate.</li> <li>• Loss of business opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium-High</b></p>
 <p><b>Political instability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corruption.</li> <li>• Deepening inequalities.</li> <li>• Distrust in institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarization.</li> <li>• Social conflict.</li> <li>• Strengthening and increasing organized groups.</li> <li>• Low productivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in foreign clients due to political uncertainty.</li> <li>• Reduction in income due to periods of inflation and recession.</li> <li>• Uncertainty to create long-term plans and projects.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>



## 5. Foresight Design

Since 2023, crime in Barranquilla has been on the rise. As mentioned above, the situation responds to disputes between criminal gangs and inefficient responses by the local government. In 2024 the current mayor's office focused on implementing comprehensive plans and strategies to mitigate insecurity in the city, however, statistics and media reports show that the situation remains complex. High-impact crimes such as homicides, extortion and threats continue to occur at high rates in the territory. Part of the problem lies in the obstacles at the institutional level to optimally carry out anti-crime projects; experts point out that there is a lack of coordination at this level, so that the focus on improving security has not achieved the best results.

Despite this, it is worth noting that the number of GDOs operating in the city has decreased with respect to the first half of 2024; the localities with the most complex insecurity problems had more than a dozen organizations, while in the period analyzed the total rate was seven.

However, the public's perception of insecurity continues to grow, which may be due to the fact that criminals are resorting to increasingly violent actions to commit crimes, as in the case of theft in different modalities.

In this sense, in the short and medium term the outlook is expected to remain complex. Even if law enforcement operations and mitigation projects of the mayor's office increase, the truth is that crime is in a time of change and adaptation, a situation that is not limited to Barranquilla, but can also be seen at the national level. The illicit markets are becoming stronger and with it the struggle of the illegal structures to seize the rents.

***Find the full version of this document here:***










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# 6. Recommendations

-  Do not transit or travel late at night in areas that, according to this document, have registered some type of criminal phenomena or have a high incidence of criminal actors, such as the southeastern area.
-  For the movement of expatriates or foreigners within Barranquilla, 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 keep an eye on your personal belongings.
-  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 extortive 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 you are a victim of threats in any of its modalities, immediately contact the authorities (Army and/or Gula Police).
-  Taking into account that retail theft is one of the few theft modalities that experienced an increase in 2024, do not keep large amounts of money in the cash registers, strengthen communication channels with other merchants and the Police and do not get distracted at the moment of opening or closing the business.

**Note.** The investigative work and analysis recorded in this security assessment is exclusive to **3+ Security Colombia**. Therefore, it is recommended not to disclose the document in question.



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