



## SECURITY OVERVIEW

Barranquilla – Atlántico

Unidad de Análisis Político y Seguridad Corporativa - UAPSC

December 11, 2024.

## Security Overview

### Barranquilla, Atlántico

#### 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).

In this document, the Unidad de Análisis Político y Seguridad Corporativa (UAPSC) of 3+SC will carry out the Security Overview-Barranquilla Second Half of 2024, analyzing the dynamics impacting security, the risk-generating factors, and criminal behavior based on statistics. The main objective is to provide an overview of the city's security situation to establish prospective scenarios and recommendations useful for the management, treatment, and control of risks.

## 2. Crime Analysis

To highlight the percentage changes and crime dynamics in Barranquilla, a criminal analysis will be conducted below, showcasing the figures and variation trends of ten high-impact crimes for two periods: the years 2022-2023 and the January-October span of 2023 vs. 2024. Subsequently, each phenomenon will be analyzed in depth, along with the risk scenarios present in the city, linking recent security incidents to the areas where they occurred.

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>16993</b>	<b>13%</b>

**Resource:** Own elaboration with information from the National Police.

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

According to figures from the National Police, by the end of 2023, there was a 10% increase in reports of various high-impact crimes in the city of Barranquilla, totaling 18,890 cases compared to 17,097 in 2022. Regarding the comparison between January-October of 2023 and 2024, an overall increase of 13% is evident, with rises in five of the ten analyzed crimes: threats by 128%, terrorism by 100%, homicides by 28%, theft from persons by 8%, and retail theft by 2%. In terms of the number of reports, the most prevalent crime affecting Barranquilla's security in 2024 is theft from persons with 11,034 cases, followed by threats with 2,280, and retail theft with 939.

### 2.1 Theft from persons

In 2024, theft from persons in Barranquilla experienced an 8% increase. According to data from the National Police, of all recorded cases, 4,902 involved firearms, 4,306 were committed without weapons, and 1,254 with bladed or sharp-edged weapons.

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 Heraldó](#), 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.

## 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 Impositores," who targeted chain stores, "Los Porteros," known for home burglaries, and "Los Kia," specialized in vehicle theft ([El Heraldó](#), 2024).

## 2.3 Homicides

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 threats

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).

### 3. Risk Generating Factors

#### 3.1 Micro-trafficking and Criminal Groups

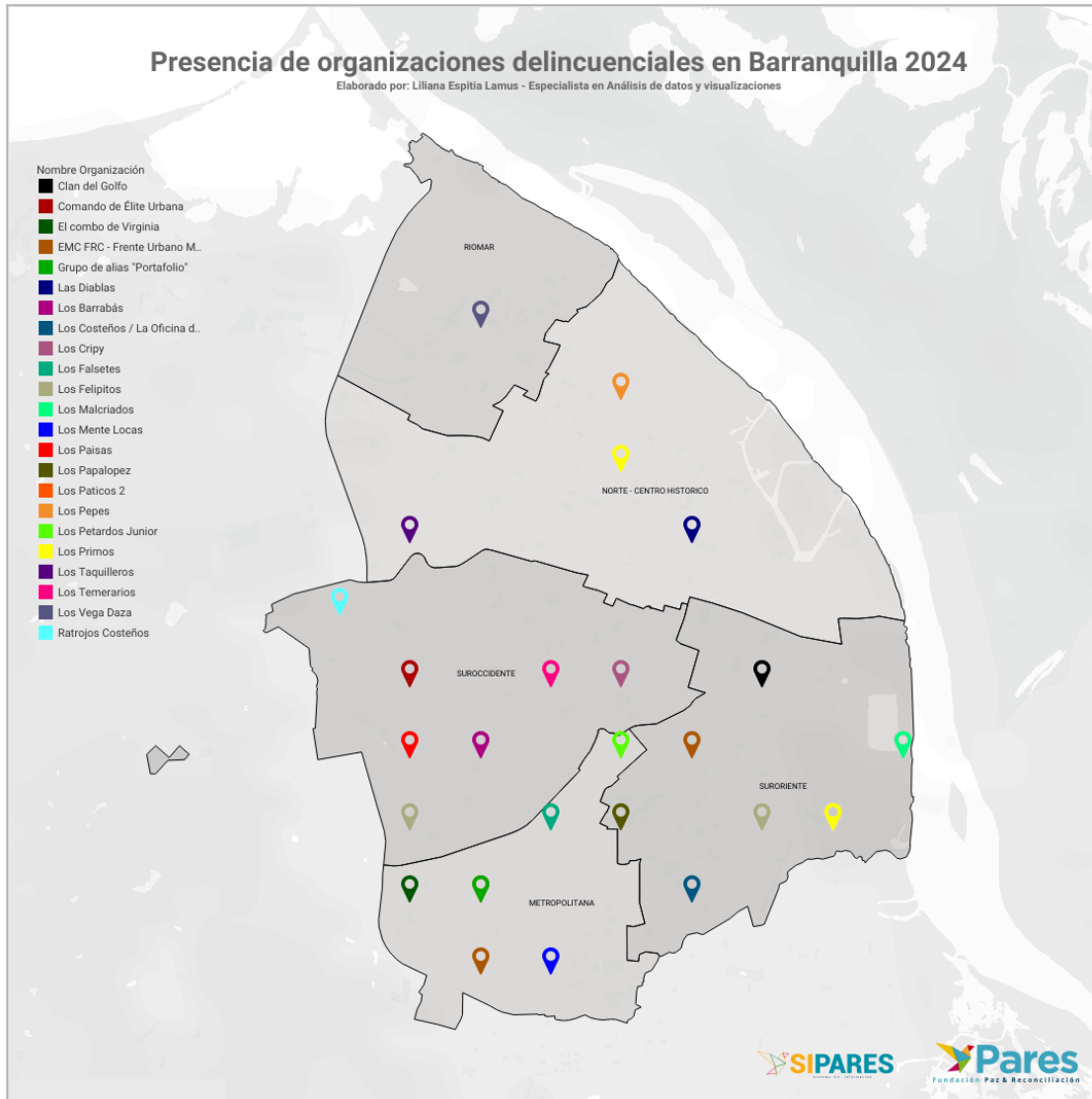
Table showing the seizures by kilograms of each type of illicit substance in Barranquilla

Illegal substance seized	Year 2022 (Kg)	Year 2023 (Kg)	Jan-sept 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.

### Presence of criminal organizations in the city of Barranquilla



Resource: PARES, 2024.

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), among which are “Los Costeños”, “Los Paisas”, “Los Rastrojos Costeños” and “Los Vega Daza” ([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.

### 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.

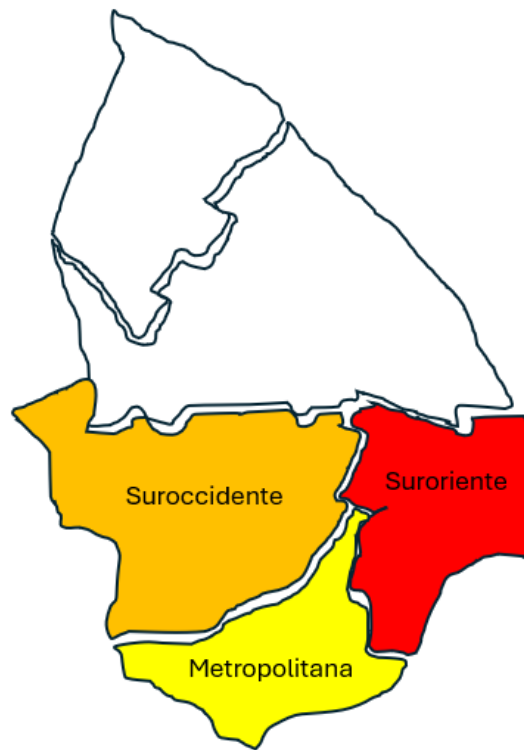
In the month of November, some Barranquilla residents joined the national mobilization against the management of the National Government ([El Tiempo](#), 2024). In September, citizens took to the streets again due to failures in the energy service, which have always affected the inhabitants of this area 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

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



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

### Conventions:

**Red:** High.

**Orange:** Medium-High.

**Yellow:** Medium.

### Medium Risk Level: Localidad Metropolitana.

The Metropolitan locality has been classified as a Medium Risk Level area since, in addition to the interference of six GDOs, it has average rates of materialization of the crimes of homicide and extortion. In the first case, the rate remains between 21 and 144 cases in most neighborhoods. In the case of extortion, the average rate is between 3 and 22 cases.

### Medium-High Risk Level: Localidad Suroccidente.

The Suroccidente locality has been classified as a Medium-High Risk Level area due to two factors. Firstly, Suroccidente is among the localities with the greatest presence of organized criminal structures, with seven in total. Secondly, taking into account all the neighborhoods that make up the territory, the area has a medium-high rate of homicide cases. In the sector there are several areas with a rate between 61-144 cases and there is one neighborhood with a fairly high rate, 144-259 cases.

### High Risk Level: Localidad Suroriente.

The Suroriente locality is the most problematic area of the city of Barranquilla. The territory has around seven organized criminal structures. In terms of homicides, the town maintains a rate similar to that of the Suroccidente town. In the area there are several neighborhoods with a rate between 61-144 cases and one with one of the highest rates, between 144 and 259 cases. Furthermore, regarding extortion, Suroriente is the locality with the highest rates of crime materialization. The neighborhood with the highest levels, between 22 and 86 cases, is located in this sector of the city.

## 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.

## 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 Guala 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.

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