



SECURITY  
COLOMBIA

Security  
**OVERVIEW**

# **MEDELLÍN**

December 2024



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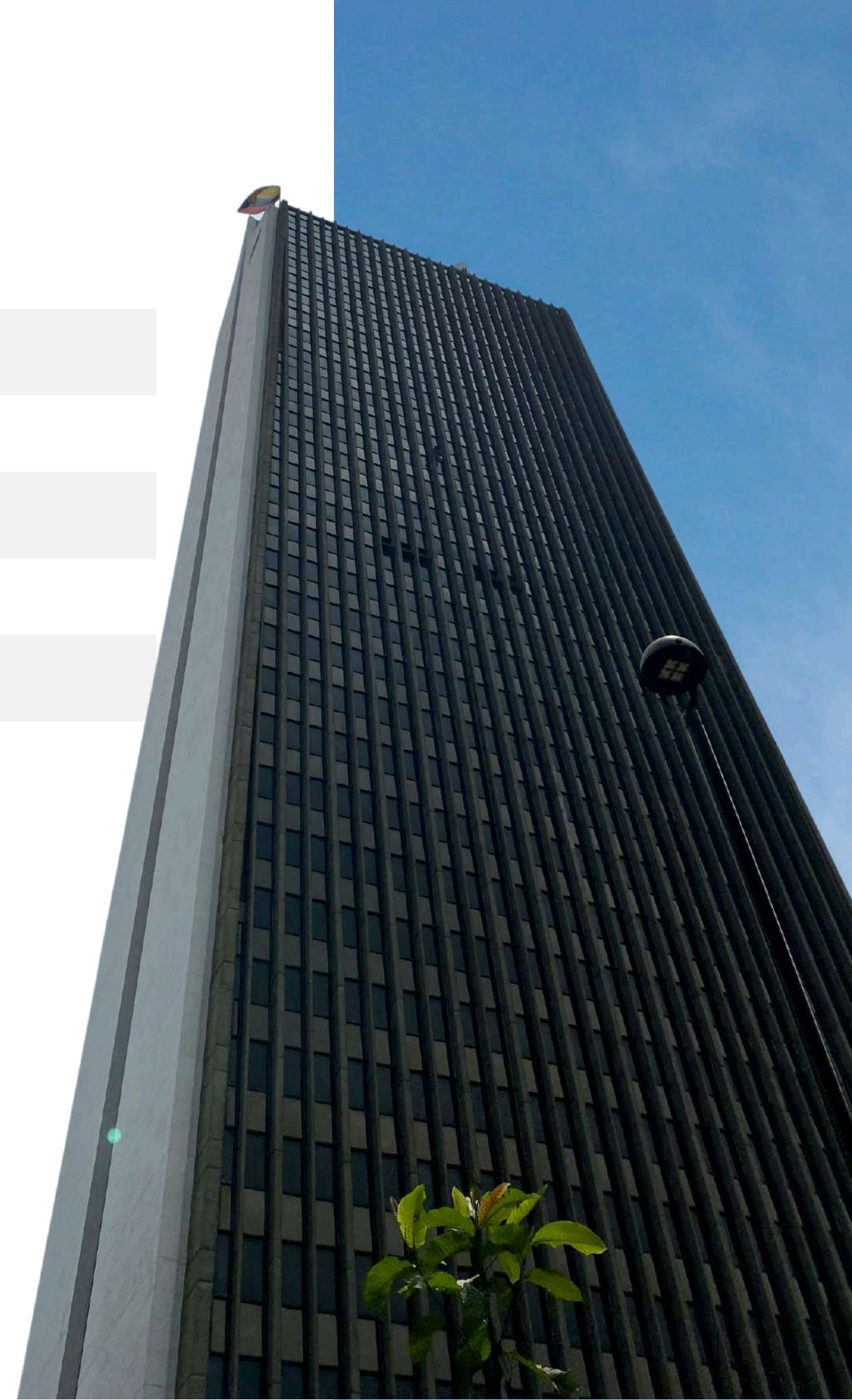
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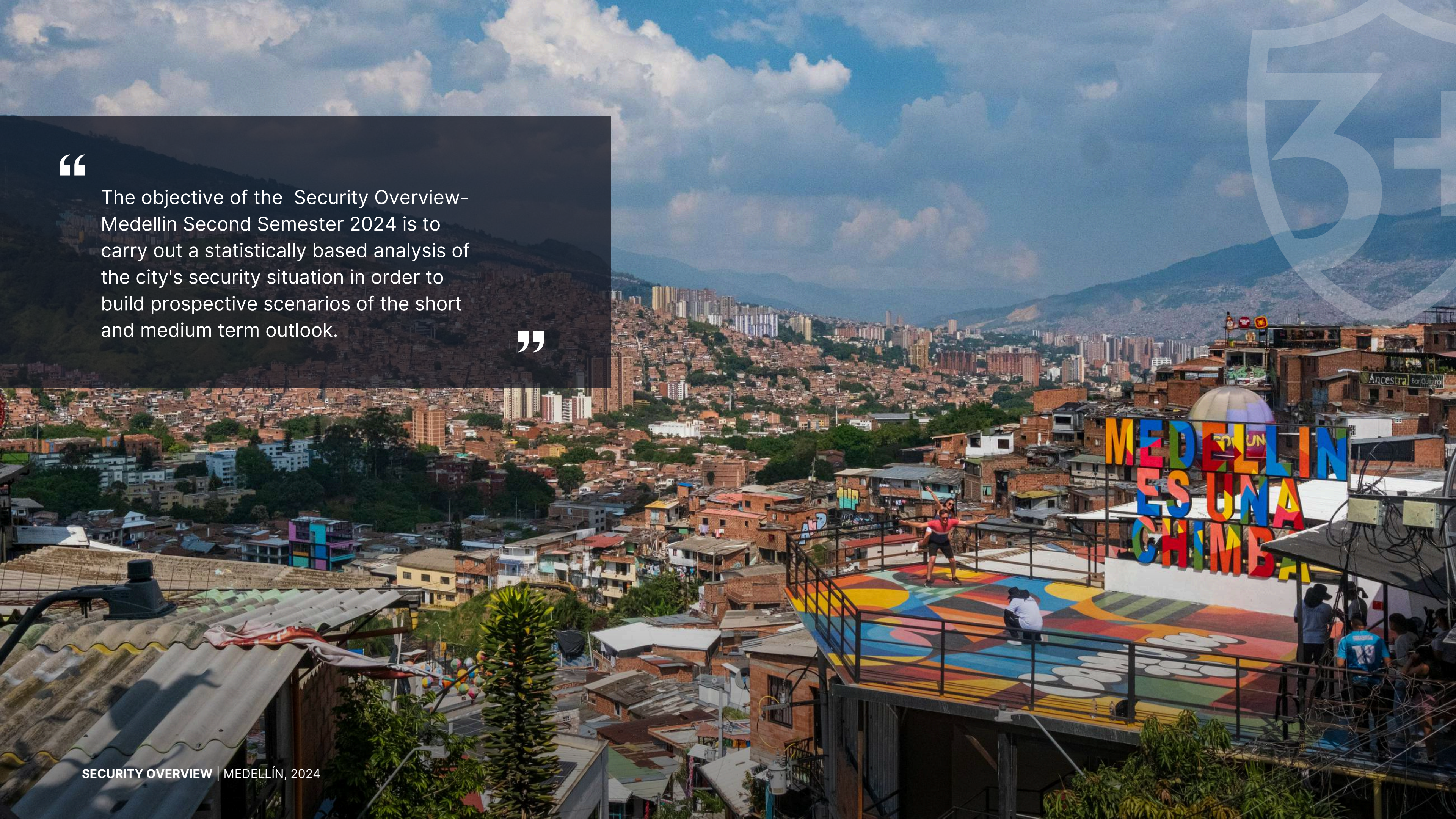




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The objective of the Security Overview-Medellin Second Semester 2024 is to carry out a statistically based analysis of the city's security situation in order to build prospective scenarios of the short and medium term outlook.

”





# 1. Situational Analysis

Although indicators such as high-impact complaints and citizen perception show an improvement in the city's security situation, criminal actors, factors and dynamics that deteriorate public order persist in Medellín. The administration of Federico Gutiérrez has focused on maximizing the operability of the security forces, achieving seizures, arrests, disarticulations and recovery of public space (*La Silla Vacía*, 2024). Despite this, problems such as poverty, inequality and lack of opportunities continue to fuel phenomena such as the exploitation of minors, sexual exploitation and micro-trafficking. Added to this is the city's nightlife image as a tourist destination, which has been reinforced in recent years, with foreigners associating Medellín with “lack of control,” narcotics and “sex tourism,” a scenario conducive to the development of crime.

# 52%

of citizens consider that Medellín is on the right track.

At a general level, the perception of security has increased, however at a more local level (in the neighborhoods) it has seen a decrease.

The total number of people who indicated having been victims of a crime also experienced a decline

# 28%

of citizens consider street robberies to be the main security problem in the neighborhoods.



# 2. Crime Analysis

## High-impact crimes in Medellín 2024

| CRIME STATISTICS IN MEDELLÍN | YEAR 2022    | YEAR 2023    | VARIATION % 2022 vs 2023 | JAN-OCT 2023  | JAN-OCT 2024 | VARIATION % JAN-OCT 2023 VS 2024 |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Homicides                    | 358          | 358          | 0%                       | 302           | 244          | -19%                             |
| Theft From Persons           | 28685        | 30953        | 8%                       | 26405         | 21644        | -18%                             |
| Extortion                    | 672          | 894          | 33%                      | 772           | 740          | -4%                              |
| Kidnapping                   | 10           | 17           | 70%                      | 16            | 5            | -69%                             |
| Threats                      | 1711         | 1497         | -12%                     | 1260          | 2499         | 98%                              |
| Terrorism                    | 3            | 0            | -100%                    | 0             | 0            | 0%                               |
| Residence Theft              | 1679         | 1673         | -1%                      | 1452          | 1362         | -6%                              |
| Carjacking                   | 1032         | 976          | -5%                      | 864           | 949          | 10%                              |
| Motorcycle Theft             | 5926         | 6201         | 5%                       | 5483          | 5065         | -8%                              |
| Retail Theft                 | 3949         | 2776         | -30%                     | 2655          | 1838         | -31%                             |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>44025</b> | <b>45345</b> | <b>3%</b>                | <b>39.209</b> | <b>34346</b> | <b>-12%</b>                      |

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

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





## 2.1 Theft from persons



**13.541**

were carried out without the use of weapons.



**2.719**

with a knife/sharp weapon.



**3.614**

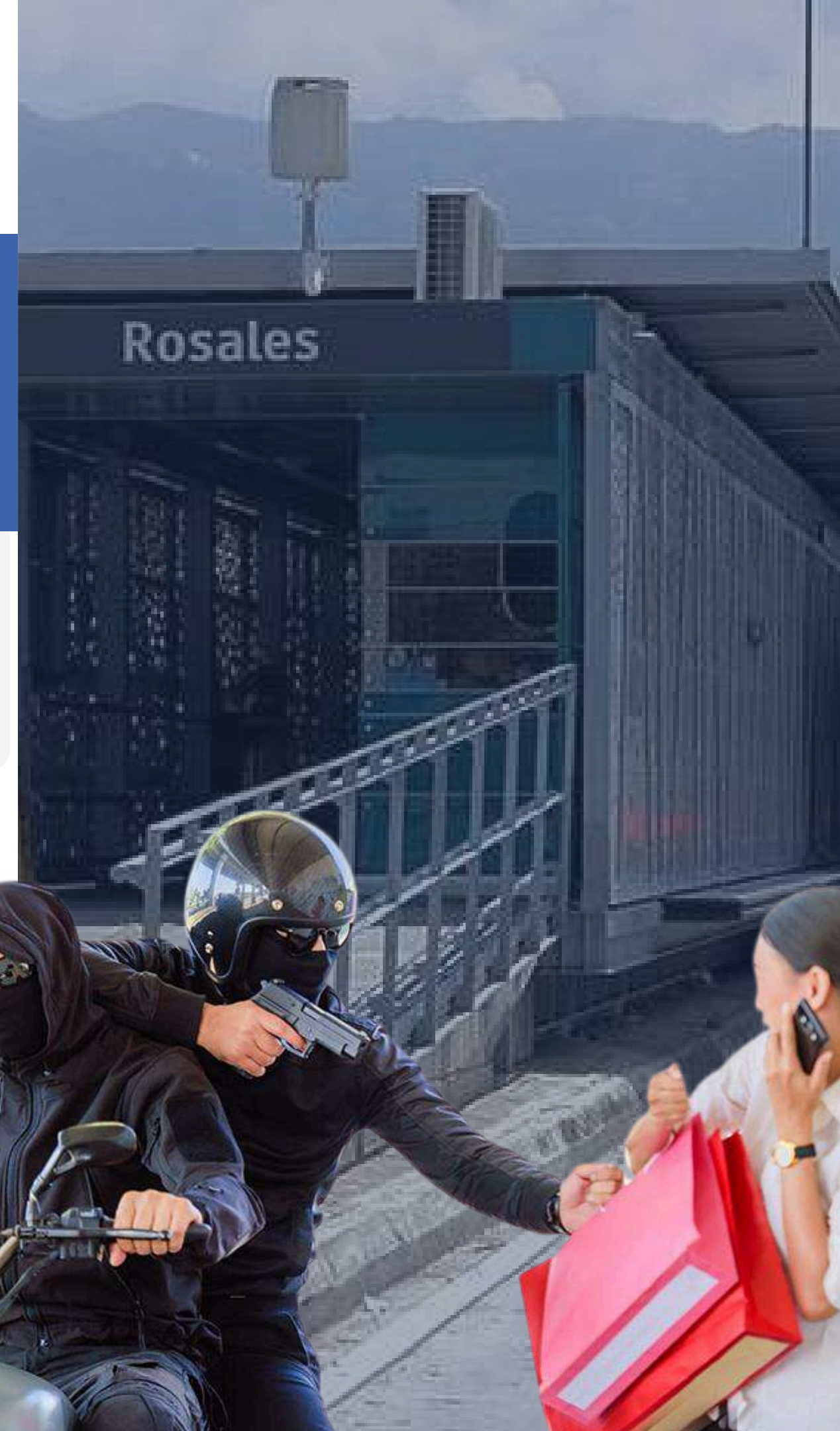
with firearms

In 2024 Medellín experienced a reduction in most high-impact crimes, among which is theft from persons. The modalities are varied, from “muggings” where violence is used to threaten and rob the victim to “tickling”, where the victim-victim uses the surprise factor and the carelessness of the person to steal.

Most are concentrated in **comuna 10 (La Candelaria), El Poblado, Laureles, Belén, and Aranjuez** are also areas highly impacted by crime.

**71**

cases of theft from persons are reported in the city on average per day.





## 2.2 Theft in different modalities

In addition to theft from persons, there are different types of theft in Medellín, such as retail theft, residence theft, carjacking, and motorcycle theft. These high-impact crimes affect the security of the citizens as they damage people's assets. In 2024, the only one of these crimes that has seen an increase in the city is carjacking. As of November, authorities recovered a total of 485 vehicles in the Valle de Aburrá, reflecting an average of 45 vehicles per month ([El Tiempo](#), 2024).

In Medellín, there are multiple modalities of carjacking. In some cases, criminals resort to violence, creating scenarios in which the victim is left in a highly vulnerable state; in others, they use special tools to force entry to the vehicle, taking advantage of the fact that the driver has left it parked in an unsafe place.

Cases January-  
October 2024

Variation  
2023 vs. 2024



**1.362**  
Residence  
theft



**6%**  
Variation



**5.065**  
Motorcycle  
theft



**8%**  
Variation



**949**  
Carjacking



**10%**  
Variation



**1.838**  
Retail  
theft



**31%**  
Variation



## 2.3 Homicides



Homicides  
in 2024:

# 134

According to institutional statistics, homicides have decreased considerably in Medellín in 2024. The cases of violent deaths this year show a historic reduction. In fact, the research center Observadores Colombia-Data & Analytics, affirms that Medellín reached one of the lowest homicide rates among the country's large cities ([Infobae, 2024](#)). In addition, at the beginning of December the city reached more than 150 days without homicides ([Caracol Radio, 2024](#)).

It should be noted that, with respect to the affected population, 11% of the victims are of Venezuelan origin, which is due to the growing migration but also to the fact that many of the migrants arrive in highly vulnerable conditions, which increases the possibility of living in violent environments ([El Colombiano, 2024](#)).





## 2.4 Extortion, threats and kidnapping

Threats are the crime with the highest percentage increase in the last year in Medellín. The victims are varied: social leaders, soccer players and coaches, and even Mayor Federico Gutiérrez have received threatening messages, calls or pamphlets. In December, Millonarios asked to reinforce security at matches due to constant intimidations against team members ([Infobae](#), 2024). In October the Ministro de Defensa confirmed that he was aware of a plan to assassinate the mayor of Medellín by GDOs, the official had previously been receiving anonymous threats ([El Colombiano](#), 2024).

Closely linked to the threat is extortion, which despite a decrease in 2024, continues to be a major problem in the capital of Antioquia. Extortion is one of the main financing tools of criminal structures. In Medellín, the “vacuna” modality currently predominates, where criminals demand money in exchange for supposed “protection services” ([El Espectador](#), 2024).

With respect to kidnapping, statistics show a downward trend. Despite this, the crime continues to occur and some cases go unreported. Among the most recent incidents is the kidnapping of 13 officials of the Mayor's Office in the Robledo Villa Sofía neighborhood. According to investigations, the criminals demanded money and information in exchange for their release ([Infobae](#), 2024).

Cases  
January-October 2024



**2.499**  
Threats



**740**  
Extortion



**5**  
Kidnapping



# 3. Risk Generating Factors

## 3.1 Micro-trafficking and criminal groups

Table reflecting seizures per kg of each type of illicit substance in Medellín

| ILICIT SUBSTANCE SEIZED | YEAR 2022 (kg)   | YEAR 2023 (kg)   | JAN-SEP 2024 (kg) |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Ecstasy-Type Stimulants | 24,232           | 19,969.60        | 14.265,30         |
| 2CB                     | 9,333.50         | 7,805            | 5.898,70          |
| Pressed Marijuana       | 2,801.07         | 5,410.49         | 4.242,38          |
| LSD                     | 2,762            | 603.7            | 3.753,00          |
| Cocaine Paste / Base    | 115.12           | 198.59           | 189,81            |
| Cocaine Hydrochloride   | 287.76           | 599.67           | 100,18            |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>39,531.45</b> | <b>34,587.05</b> | <b>21,118.13</b>  |

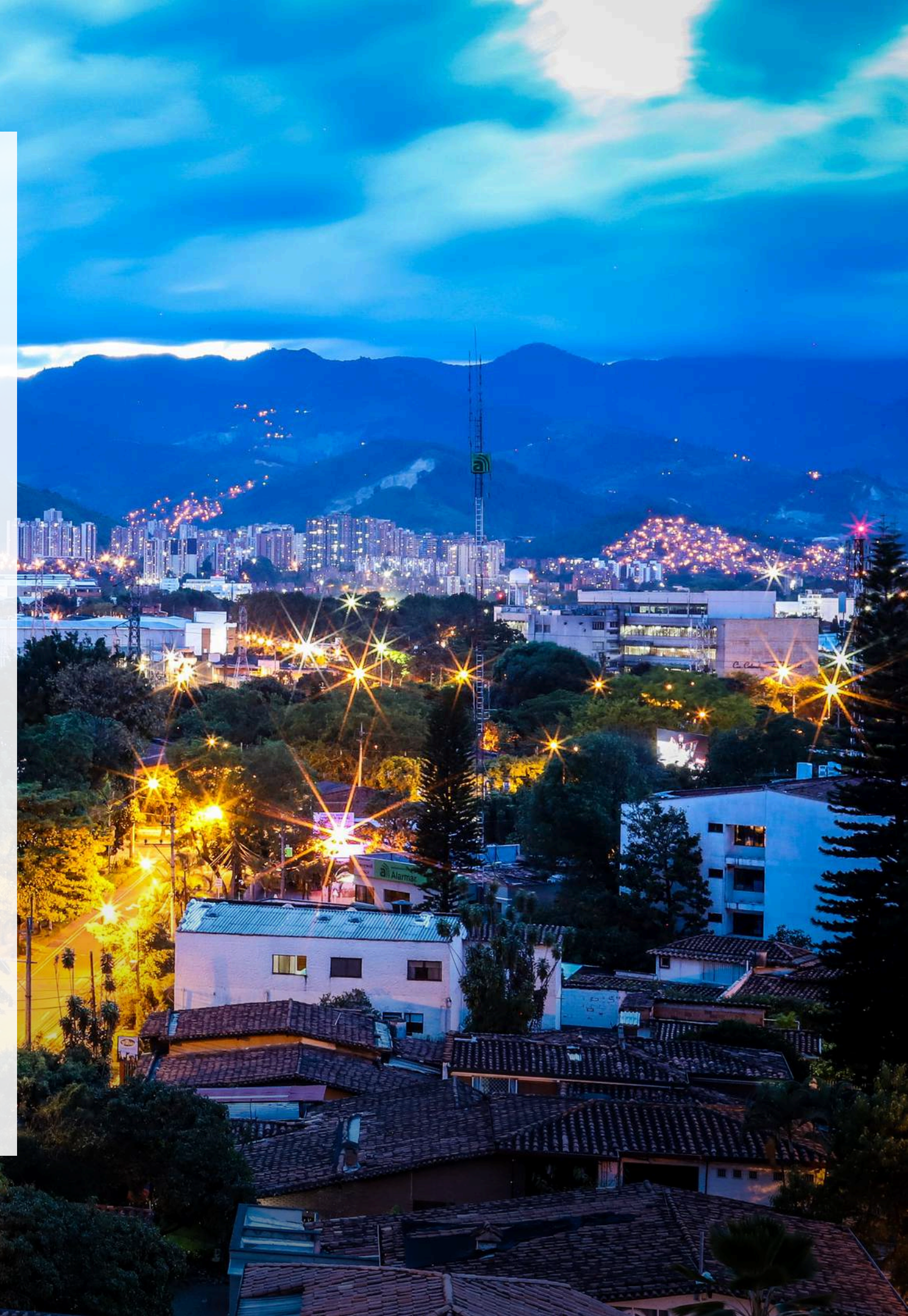
**Resource:** Own elaboration with information from the National Police.

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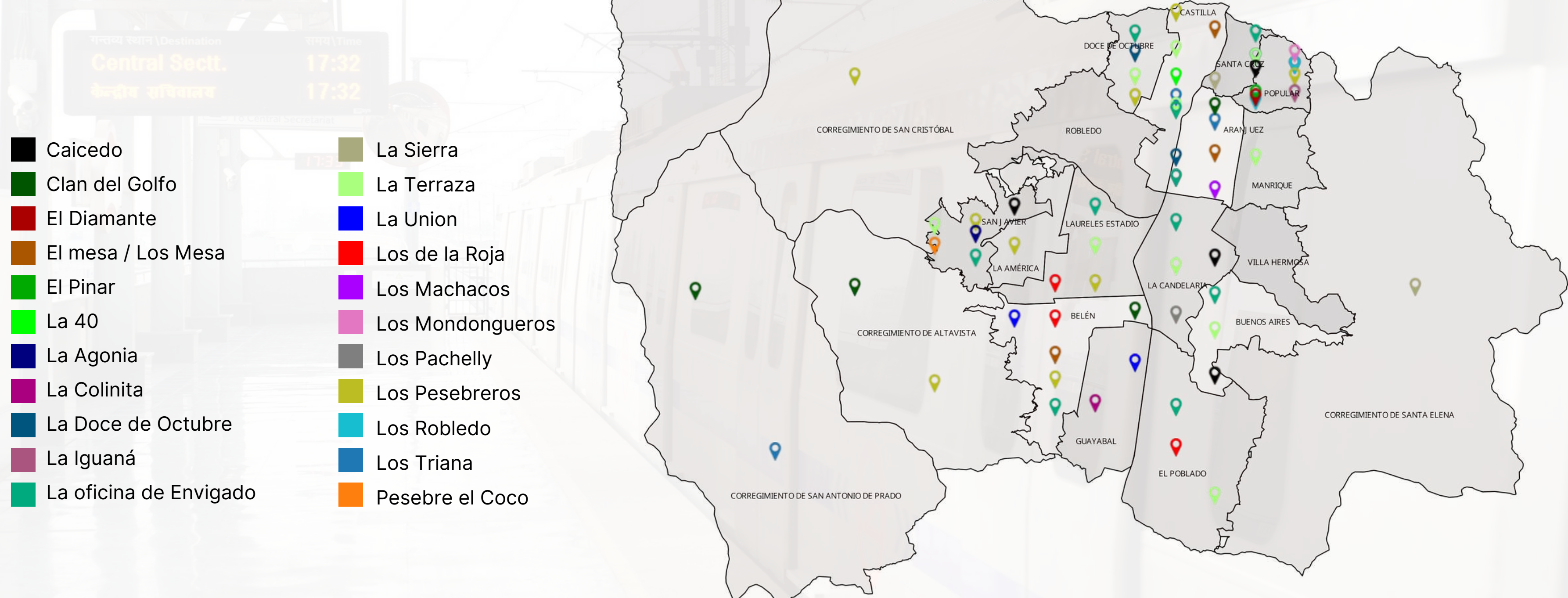
Criminal groups in Medellín have been the main articulators of micro-trafficking in the city. This illicit income has been one of the most lucrative for the organizations, which is why it has remained part of the criminal dynamics over time. This situation has generated high levels of violence in the neighborhoods, as it has led to the existence of “invisible borders” between gangs to define who has the power to commit crimes in a given territory. Along with micro-trafficking, criminal groups have found financing in other crimes such as extortion of merchants through “vacunas” and contract killings.

Specifically in Medellín and its metropolitan area, there are around 22 criminal organizations that maintain this dynamic, among which stands out an Organized Armed Group (GAO), the “Clan del Golfo” or “AGC”, which has lost presence in the territory, but maintains important alliances with criminal gangs through subcontracting processes (criminal franchises) (PARES, 2024). The Organized Criminal Groups (GDOs), such as “La Oficina de Envigado”, “Los Pachelly”, “Los Pesebreros” or “La Terraza” in turn group together more than 300 combos that operate in the different neighborhoods (Vorágine, 2024). These organizations operate in the 16 communes of Medellín and in areas of the Valle de Aburrá.





# Distribution of criminal structures in the city of Medellín







## 3.2 Extortion



Although police data show a decrease in extortion cases in Medellín, authorities and experts on the subject point out that it could be a combination of under-reporting of the figures and normalization of the crime on the part of the victims. According to data from universities such as EAFIT and the University of Chicago, approximately 150,000 households in Medellín pay extortion between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per week, while businesses pay between \$15,000 and \$100,000. In these cases, extortion occurs mainly through “vaccines”, where criminals charge for supposed protection services, when in reality they only demand the money so that the victims can carry out their daily activities and not suffer retaliation ([El Espectador](#), 2024).

As the criminal organizations become increasingly consolidated as a financing tool for criminals, there may be a normalization of the dynamics in the communities, to the point that the victims believe they are paying for a legitimate service. This is intensified by the lack of institutional presence, where the State is not present, criminal organizations come to occupy the space and operate as if they were the law, this is called “criminal governance”. As Sebastián Londoño, researcher at the Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP) says, “Behind all this there is a kind of provision of justice, conflict resolution or security services by armed criminal actors, which ends up being a transition towards criminal governance (...)” ([El Espectador](#), 2024).



## 3.3 Instrumentalization of minors and sexual exploitation

The exploitation of minors and sexual exploitation are problems that have attracted the attention of the media and citizens in the capital of Antioquia in 2024. Recently, two cases of foreigners with minors were reported again in less than 24 hours, which sets off alarm bells despite the efforts of the authorities. According to statistics from the Secretaría de Inclusion Social, 900 children and adolescents have suffered from violation of their rights between January and August 2024, 139 of which have been for issues related to sexual exploitation. Popular, Santa Cruz, Manrique, Villa Hermosa and La Candelaria are the communities most affected by the exploitation of minors (([El Tiempo](#), 2024).

The issue is not limited to sexual exploitation; minors are also used to commit crimes, such as the sale of narcotics, or for begging. Most of the time, criminals take advantage of children's vulnerable conditions, related to the socio-economic environment and drug addiction, to lure them into the world of illegality ([Infobae](#), 2024). According to the Secretaría de Seguridad de Medellín, 100% of the illegal groups use minors, who recruit close to 1,000 young people per year. In schools in lower-income neighborhoods, between 8% and 10% of seventh and eighth grade students express their desire to join the illegal groups ([El Tiempo](#), 2024).





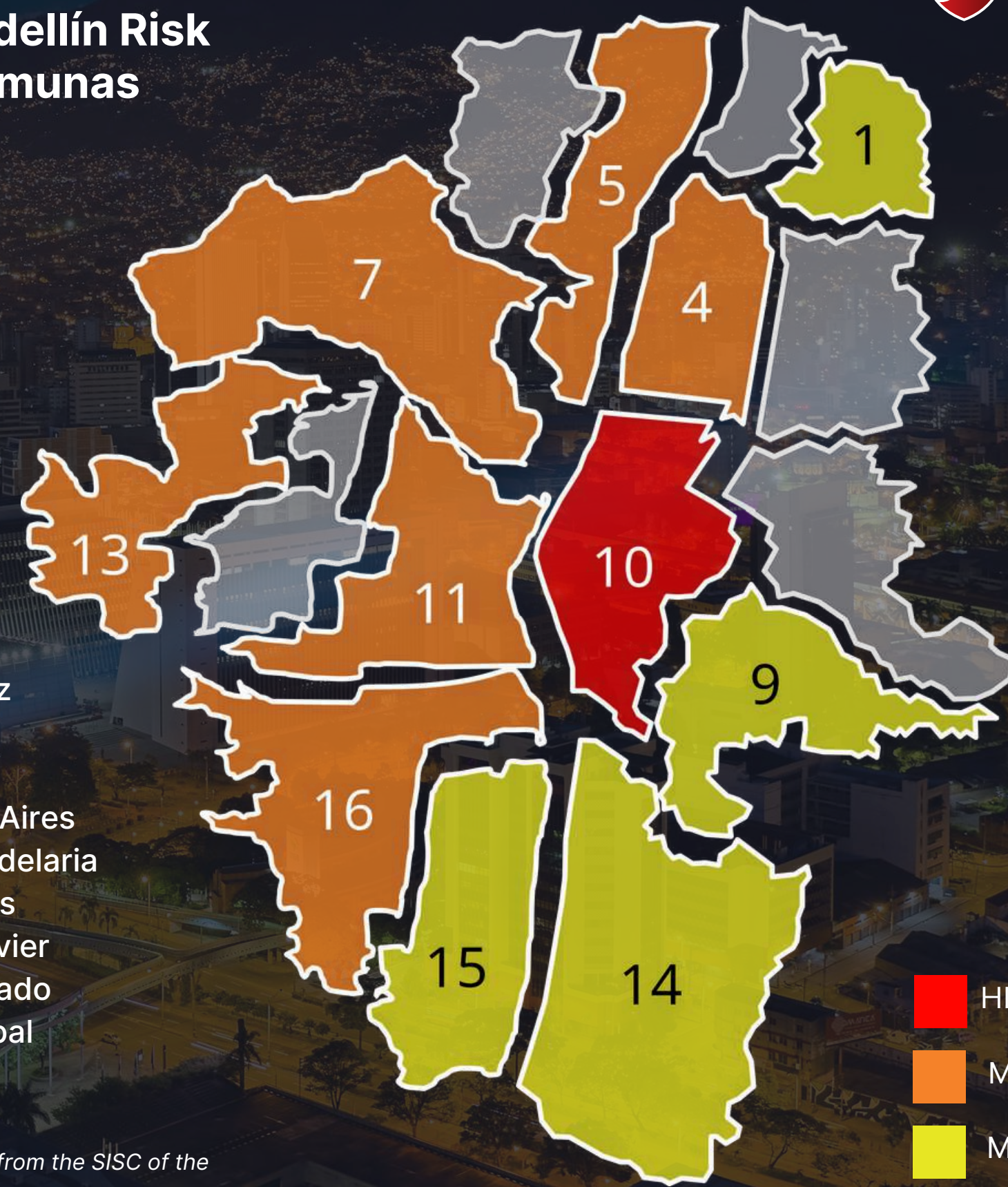
# 4. Risk Level

## Risk Analysis

The objective of the risk level analysis is to identify the areas where, according to institutional statistics, there is a greater possibility of violence and high-impact crimes. In the case of this Security Overview-Medellín Second Semester 2024, the characterization will be based on the security and statistics of the Sistema de Información para la Seguridad y la Convivencia (SISC) of the Mayor's Office of Medellín. The most problematic areas of the city will be identified through three indicators: homicide, robbery and extortion.

Map of Medellín Risk level by comunas




- Comuna 1: Popular
- Comuna 4: Aranjuez
- Comuna 5: Castilla
- Comuna 7: Robledo
- Comuna 9: Buenos Aires
- Comuna 10: La Candelaria
- Comuna 11: Laureles
- Comuna 13: San Javier
- Comuna 14: El Poblado
- Comuna 15: Guayabal
- Comuna 16: Belén



Resource: Own elaboration from the SISC of the Alcaldía de Medellín, 2024.



## Analysis of the dynamics of risks in the city of Medellín so that companies can evaluate 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 micro-trafficking phenomenon in common and organized crime, developing networks of hired killings 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 businesses.</li> <li>• Decrease in tourism potential.</li> <li>• Increase in complaints of extortion, threats and homicides.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impact on the supply or value chain due to the permeability of crime.</li> <li>• Non-fulfillment of services or commitments.</li> <li>• Leakage of personnel with intentions of harming 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>• Increasing poverty and inequality.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in foreign investment in the city.</li> <li>• Low wages.</li> <li>• Labor informality.</li> <li>• Inflation.</li> <li>• Limitation and inadequate use of public space.</li> <li>• Low business generation.</li> <li>• Increased recruitment of criminal groups.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced demand for services and products.</li> <li>• Decrease in revenues.</li> <li>• Increased costs due to phenomena such as inflation.</li> <li>• Limitation of operating capacities.</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>• Mistrust in institutions.</li> <li>• Main factors that generate risk</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarization.</li> <li>• Social conflict.</li> <li>• Strengthening and increase of 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>• Reduced revenues due to periods of inflation and recession.</li> <li>• Uncertainty in creating long-term plans and projects.</li> </ul>                                                                          | <p><b>Low</b></p>         |



## 5. Foresight Design

In the second half of 2024, the number of high-impact crimes has generally decreased in the city of Medellín. This is the result of several factors. On the one hand, there are the projects and strategies of the Mayor's Office to mitigate crime, this includes both the strengthening of the operation of the security forces and social programs that seek to create opportunities for young people, such is the case of the “Parceros” project. On the other hand, there is the truce situation, agreed since 2023, that the GDOs have among themselves within the framework of the Total Urban Peace. In this sense, the favorable panorama in the city is not exclusively due to the efforts of the local government, but is related to the interactions between criminal organizations.

In addition to the above, despite the efforts of the public administration to address the serious problem of sexual exploitation and instrumentalization of minors in the city, today Medellín is internationally recognized as a nightlife scene with excesses, even being associated with “sex tourism”. As long as this image continues, the capital of Antioquia will be the perfect scenario for criminality to develop its illegal markets, such as micro-trafficking, extortion, exploitation and instrumentalization of minors.

Particularly with regard to extortion, the crime has become a growing criminal phenomenon, and although the figures show that the number of victims of extortion is increasing, it is still a very high crime.

Given the structural nature of the problems that generate criminal phenomena in the capital of Antioquia, in the short and medium term the security panorama will continue to be challenging for the authorities. Considering the power of the gangs, their decisions and what is discussed in the context of Total Urban Peace will be decisive.

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document here:***








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# 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 districts with a high risk level in the city. This in order not to transit through them or to provide safety and self-care plans.
-  Do not transit or travel late at night in neighborhoods or districts that, according to this document, have registered some type of criminal phenomena or show high levels of interference by criminal actors.
-  For the movement of expatriates or foreigners within Medellin, consider the likelihood of having systems to monitor their movements remotely from a Command Center.
-  Avoid having detailed or sensitive information about your family members, as well as the organization you work for, on your cell phone.

-  If you are going out to night entertainment centers, do not go out alone and always keep an eye on your drink or food. Criminals take advantage of these spaces to supply their victims with shotguns.
-  If you are in crowded places such as restaurants, shopping malls or bars, always take care of your personal belongings and avoid engaging in conversations with people who suddenly ask for favors or suddenly want to approach you.
-  Do not date strangers or people you recently met through social networks or dating apps. Criminals use these platforms to carry out express kidnappings and rob their victims.
-  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.
-  If you are a victim of threats in any of its modalities, contact the authorities immediately and do not give in to the offender's requests.

**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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