



Editorial

UNIDAD DE ANÁLISIS POLITICO Y SEGURIDAD CORPORATIVA



ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

GLOBAL

Drug trafficking networks and organized crime: increasing connections between Latin America and Europe

REGIONAL

What are the security implications for Latin America following the expansion of cartel conflict in Mexico in 2024?

LOCAL

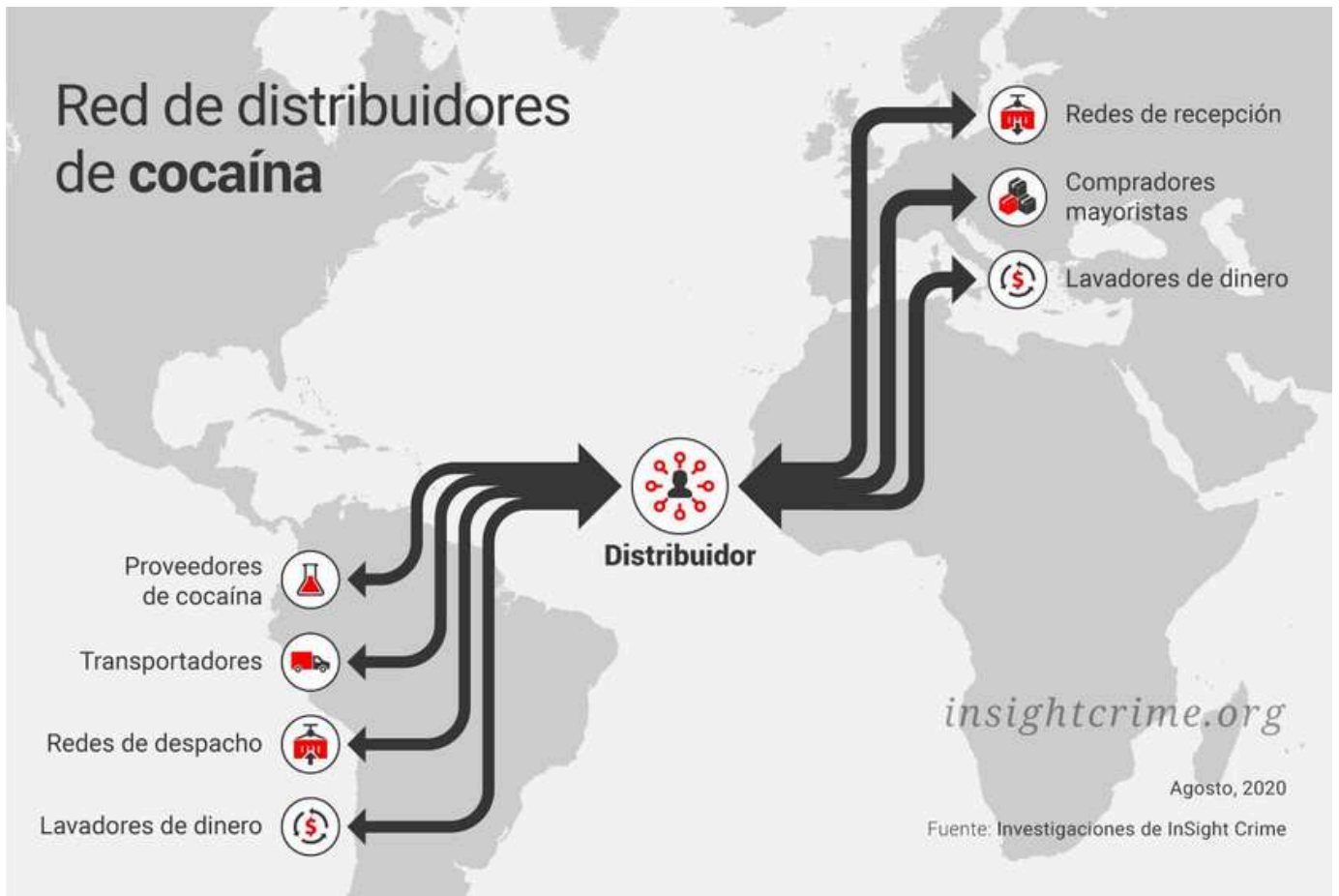
Security in Bogota: 2024 balance and 2025 prospective





Drug trafficking networks and organized crime: increasing connections between Latin America and Europe

The fall of large traditional drug trafficking structures, such as the Medellín Cartel in the 1990s and the AUC and FARC in recent decades, has led to significant changes in drug trafficking. The organizations that sustain this business have had to adapt to new circumstances. From cocaine producers in countries such as Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, to the Brazilian, Mexican and European mafias that distribute the product in global markets, they have modified their methods to operate with greater discretion, while maintaining a continuous flow of drugs. An example of this is the increase in illicit coca cultivation in Colombia since 2020, along with an increase in cocaine consumption, reflected in sewage studies in European cities ([InSight Crime, 2025](#)). It is therefore critical to analyze how the dynamics of drug trafficking between South America and Europe have evolved, as well as how security forces on both continents can respond to new threats.



Resource: InSight Crime, 2021.

Among the major European mafias that have established operations in Latin America are Italian mafias, such as the Camorra and the 'Ndrangheta, as well as Balkan mafias, especially the Albanians. Historically, these transnational groups relied on direct agreements with powerful criminal organizations in Latin America. However, in recent times, it has been observed that the networks have become more complex, with more intermediaries and various pacts with different organizations, ensuring the continuous flow of cocaine, even if one of the parties falls. A clear example is the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), Brazil's largest criminal gang, which does not exclusively source cocaine from the Estado Mayor Central (EMC) or the Clan del Golfo in Colombia but also maintains links with producers in Peru and Bolivia. This diversification ensures continuity of supply, even if any of its allies are dismantled. In addition, the PCC maintains alliances with various European mafias to distribute the drug through different ports, thus always ensuring a sales market. These mafias also operate in several South American cities, maintaining relationships with various organizations to facilitate uninterrupted trade (InSight Crime, 2025).



Another strategy adopted by criminal organizations is to reduce the profile of their operations and decentralize power. In this way, if a leader is captured or neutralized, the organization can continue to operate. This makes it difficult to dismantle the groups, since, unlike in previous eras, eliminating the “capo” no longer implies the dissolution of the entire structure ([InSight Crime, 2024](#)). Decentralization allows a small number of individuals to travel to foreign territories to set up deals, which minimizes visibility and reduces the risk of detection. In addition, this strategy decreases the frequency of violent confrontations over control of territory, which helps keep the operation's profile low ([InSight Crime, 2025](#)).

In terms of the most effective measures to curb these complex networks, high-profile seizures and blocking outbound routes to lucrative markets such as Europe have proven to be the most successful strategies. During the pandemic, restrictions at major ports led to a decrease in the flow of cocaine, forcing criminals to resort to riskier methods and lower volumes of product ([InSight Crime, 2025](#)). Another effective strategy has been the identification of alternative businesses used by European mafias in countries such as Colombia, Peru, Brazil or Mexico, such as real estate investments, which are used to launder drug money. By disrupting these activities, the mafias' economy is directly affected, which in the long term contributes to curbing their criminal operations ([InSight Crime, 2024](#)).

It is therefore essential that Latin American governments encourage closer cooperation between their law enforcement agencies and security forces. This would prevent criminals, when cornered in one country, from easily fleeing to another to continue their activities. More coordinated port control and the identification of illicit economic activities would significantly help to dismantle the complex network between European and Latin American criminals.

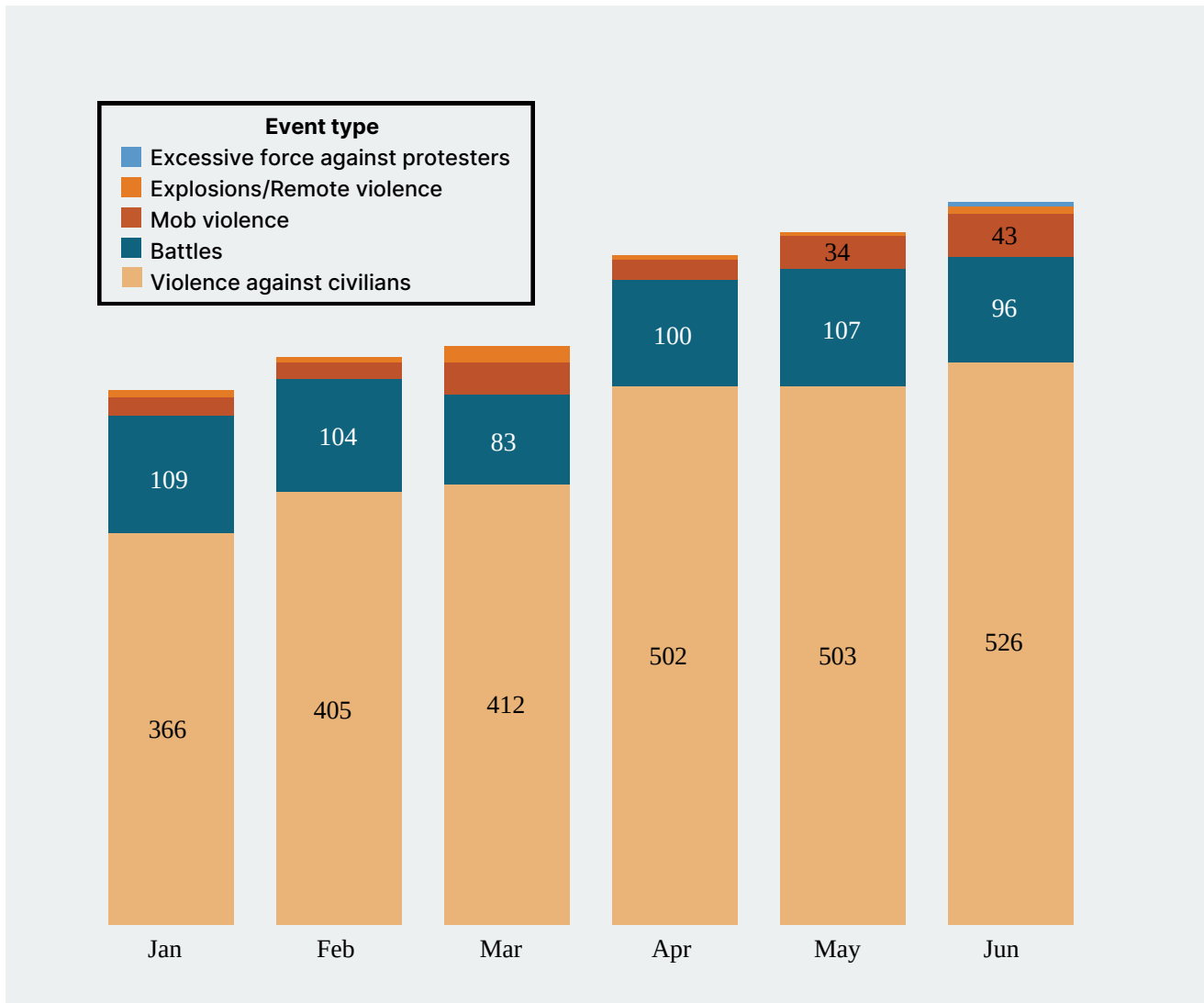
REGIONAL



What are the security implications for Latin America following the expansion of cartel conflict in Mexico in 2024?

In its most recent research, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) ranked Mexico as the fourth most conflict-ridden country in the world, preceded only by Palestine, Myanmar and Syria. According to the report, Mexico is the second most dangerous country for civilians, the fourth most fragmented among violent groups and the seventh deadliest. The conclusions of the study result from various factors and variables, among which are the more than 500 violent events against political figures registered during 2024, the more than 30,000 murders per year and the 18% increase in the lethality rate of clashes between illegal armed groups ([El País](#), 2025).

Types of violent events in Mexico (first semester 2024)



Resource: ACLED, 2024.

One of the most relevant factors when dealing with the increase in violence in Mexico is the consolidated presence of criminal actors and the dispute between them to obtain rents from illicit markets. Such is the case of structures such as the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG) and the Cartel de Sinaloa, which have grown considerably stronger in recent years and maintain a “war” for the control of drug trafficking. These groups resort to extreme public use of violence (massacres, public executions, kidnappings, forced disappearances, among others) to establish territorial authority, thus constituting a real threat to the civilian population (ACLED, 2024). The Cartel de Sinaloa is currently fragmented, so it is expected that in 2025 the CJNG will take advantage of the situation to expand its control in the areas of dispute, thus dynamizing violence (El Tiempo, 2025).



Sheinbaum will face an increasingly complex panorama of criminal reorganization, where conflicts between structures are likely to intensify and expand to new areas, especially those with greater influence of the Cartel de Sinaloa. Added to this is the presence of crime in local governments, which further complicates the picture and hinders the materialization of an efficient response. Even if Sheinbaum implements more drastic security measures, the “cartel war”, the consolidation of criminal structures and the arrival of Trump to power are factors that could destabilize the situation. Trump has stated that he will impose harsh retaliation against Mexico for failing to curb drug trafficking and migration flows, which could “exacerbate the fragmentation of the criminal landscape, fuel internal power struggles and intensify clashes between rival factions” ([El Tiempo](#), 2025).

The increase in violence, the “cartel war” and the consolidation of criminal organizations in Mexico would have a regional impact. It should be remembered that organized crime is currently transnational in nature, so that major criminal structures in one country are linked to others at the regional and global levels. In this sense, a change in the dynamics of violence in Mexico due to the “accommodation” of cartels would have direct consequences in other countries. Additionally, it is worth noting that criminality and violence are closely linked to social phenomena such as migration, in this sense an intensification of the conflict in Mexico and strict migration policies (such as those that Trump seeks for the US and other Latin American countries have already implemented), could lead to an increase in illegal migration, a situation that affects the countries of the region.



Security in Bogota: 2024 balance and 2025 prospective

The security panorama in Bogota continues to represent enormous challenges for the authorities. Although Galán's arrival resulted in new measures to tackle crime, the truth is that insecurity rates remain quite high and the citizenry's perception of security is on decline. Since 2016, the percentage of inhabitants who perceive an increase in insecurity in the capital has maintained an upward trend. In addition to this, 74% of citizens consider that the situation in Bogota has worsened, with insecurity being the main cause ([Razón Pública, 2024](#)). Due to its high materialization in the city, the crimes that most concern the mayor's office are homicides, gender violence, extortion and domestic violence ([Noticias RCN, 2025](#)).

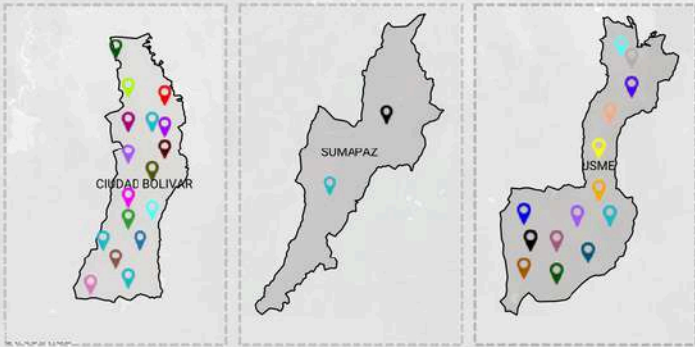
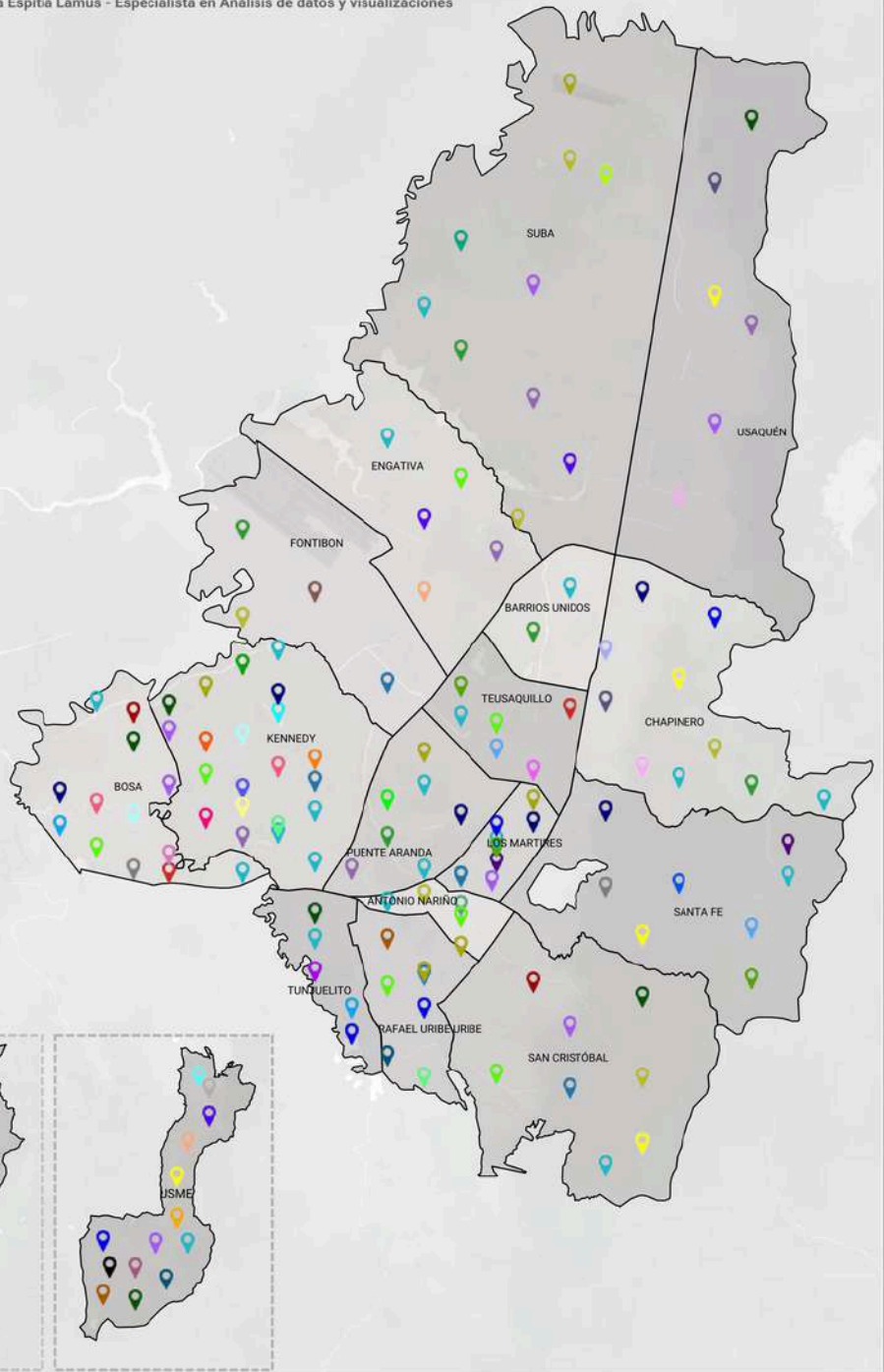
Extortion has become particularly relevant in the last year. The crime is a growing phenomenon. Although the authorities have made important arrests and dismantled reputable organizations dedicated to this practice, the reality is that extortion as an easy financing tool has spread locally and nationally. In Bogotá, both the GDOs that have been consolidating in recent years and smaller gangs have included this type of action in their criminal records.

Presencia de organizaciones delincuenciales en Bogotá 2024

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Nombre Organización

- Los Aviancazos
- Alameda
- Banda de alias "Guri"
- Cataleya
- Clan del Golfo
- Disidencias de las FARC
- El Comité
- El Mesa / Los Paisas
- El nuevo Tren de Aragua
- ELN
- Galeras
- Génesis
- Kronos
- La 108
- La Empresa
- La Nueva Generación
- La Oficina de San Andresito
- Las Sombras
- Los Boyacos
- Los Camiloe
- Los Cartuchín
- Los Caucanos
- Los Cheos
- Los Cobias
- Los Colchoneros
- Los Cosquilleros
- Los de la Tercera
- Los del Clerre
- Los del Sendero
- Los Diablos
- Los Elenos
- Los Fénix
- Los Frontera
- Los Gama
- Los Guaqueros
- Los Hestias
- Los Imeis
- Los Inquietos
- Los Lannister
- Los Lobos
- Los Lucky
- Los Maracuchos
- Los Marcadores
- Los Nandos
- Los Niches
- Los ParkWay
- Los Pascuales
- Los Peña
- Los Pescados
- Los Porkis
- Los Rólex
- Los Roncos
- Los Saturno
- Los Sintéticos
- Los Taquilleros
- Los Telefonistas
- Los Toyoterios
- Los Yayas
- Marandú
- Marduk
- Mercurio
- Satanás
- Tren de Aragua
- Tren de los Alemanes



Resource: Pares, 2024.

According to Councilman Julian Sastoque, one of the most recurrent modalities is the use of "call-centers" in penitentiary centers ([Noticias RCN, 2025](#)). In fact, according to the Metropolitan Police, 40% of extortions in Bogotá occur from prisons under the modality of impersonation ([El Espectador, 2024](#)). Kennedy, Bosa and Los Mártires are the areas most affected by this problem in the city ([Infobae, 2024](#)).



Although the causes of the situation are multiple, one of the most direct and relevant is the emergence and consolidation of illegal organizations. According to Pares, there are currently more than 60 illegal structures operating in Bogotá, three of which correspond to Organized Armed Groups (GAOs) and the rest to Organized Criminal Groups (GDOs). The three GAOs are the Clan del Golfo, FARC dissidents and the ELN. It is worth noting that in this urban context these types of structures operate as cells, unlike in rural environments. With respect to the GDOs, among them “El Tren de Aragua”, “La Oficina”, “Los Boyacos” and “El Mesa” stand out (Pares, 2024). Comparatively, when analyzing the last two maps of interference of illegal groups in Pares, it can be seen that in the last year the presence of this type of actors in the capital has almost doubled (Pares, 2024).

Taking into account that the interference of criminal structures has increased in the last year in Bogotá, that the panorama in terms of insecurity and violence at the national level has worsened and that the problems and criminal phenomena of 2024 are still in force, it is expected that in the short and medium term the situation will not see substantial positive changes. In order for the situation to change, it is necessary that the national and local governments restructure their crime mitigation and prevention strategies. The new governmental responses must be based on coordination between the different actors responsible for guaranteeing the rights and welfare of citizens.

Note. *The investigative work and analysis contained in this report is exclusive to 3+ Security Colombia. Therefore, it is recommended not to disclose the document in question. 3+Security Colombia Ltda., reserves the right to interpretation that may arise by the reader in the review and visualization of the information presented".*



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